THE COMMONWEAL

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THE TWO ADVENTS

THE gospels read in Catholic and Protestant Episcopal churches at the beginning of Advent are tremendous documents. It is hard for the least believing to listen to them without an inward tremor. Four weeks before the world will dismiss the old year into the limbo of chronology to the sound of bells and sirens, the Church chooses to turn its back upon the past and its face to the future. It is very much as though, for a moment, the overlay of the ecclesiastical upon the lay calendar broke down, and through the gap that ensued, accents "incommunicably sad and strange" were heard, warning the descendant of Adam that his time is a fallacious measure, made only to steady his vertigo between twin infinities, and that here he has no abiding dwelling.

It is a strange and uncanny voice, full of terror and chaos. It foretells a final Advent when the planets shall falter in their ordered courses, when the sea shall return to the horror of roaring blackness out of which the continents emerged, and when a world that has banished fear with faith shall mourn, as four blood-red arms across the darkness proclaim its shrewdness folly. Not until a crescendo of terror, unmatched in any literature, sacred or profane, has been attained, does the tone change. Abruptly a parting message reaches us that is as thrilling as the silvery notes with which our great masters in music, after a stormy prelude full of drums and horns, usher in an allegro movement that might almost be said to be light transposed into melody. "When these things shall come to pass, lift up your heads, because your redemption is at hand."

Now it is very evident that this blazing paradox, which is left the one spot of cheer in the Church's antiphon of terror, comes with what might be termed a limited appeal. Who are the people that need feel no dismay when the world is giving signs of returning to its original chaos? Who are the singular folk that are to be left with faith and hope intact when the means of communication that have knit nation to nation are snapped, and when even light fails? Commentators and poets of the catastrophic order have naturally busied themselves with surmise. Everything has been suggested, from a millennium that shall usher in the reign of Christ, to a general apostasy with some architect of ruin as its Antichrist, leaving the faithful a mere remnant. A more practical suggestion for ourselves is that any message which propounds the end of time as good news must needs be addressed to the unworldly mind. The people who are to be least surprised when the world perishes are naturally those who have taken it least seriously. The

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people who will be least dismayed at the world's bankruptcy will be those who have invested most lightly in its perishable securities. It is by no accident that the Church, when it would cleanse our hearts and wills for the celebration of the first Coming, seeks to instill into them the overwhelming nature of the second. We are best prepared for the lesson of the stable when we are in no doubt at all over what is going to happen the palace.

What is loosely termed the Christmas season, and which seems to begin earlier and earlier each year, always finds worldly consciences somewhat more receptive to unworldly considerations, a little less confident in the essential rightness of the dispensation which apportions the purple and the rags, the banquet and the sores, and a little readier to do what they can to redress the balance, if only for twenty-four hours. It would be grateful, but is not necessary, to see some conscious subscription to Christian ideals in this feeling. An old legend tells us that upon each anniversary of the day when troops of angels escorted the Orient to His earthly tenement, a celestial aura is abroad which prompts the very beasts of the field to kneel. No less so in the heart of man. All the fresh contradictions that can be heaped upon a Sign contradicted from its very start, have not eradicated some sentiment, rooted in old tradition, that during the last three or four weeks of the year generosity to the less favored may cease to be a mere social salve, and assume the ancient and ardent hues of Christian charity. Over in England, Mr. Stanley Baldwin has just been telling us that, more and more, as the state assumes the wardship of the poor, the time for what he pleases to call "emotionalized benevolence" is seen to have gone by. Others, less phlegmatic in the face of suffering than Britain's pipe-smoking premier is showing himself to be, will doubt the truth of the plausible gloss upon an old text. At least, they will not be ashamed at the emotion that seizes upon them when, year by year, thousands of their brethren in Christ are shown to be dependant upon the crumbs that fall from their table for everything that shall mark off Christmas Day from any other day in their drab calendar.

They may even go farther and believe that in the last resort the worth-whileness of benevolence is pretty sharply dependent upon the exact emotion with which it is tinctured. It is not falling foul of organized charity, which is a wholly blessed and commendable thing, to perceive that inquiries into the root causes of poverty, waged with all the resources of science at their disposal, may carry with them a certain definite danger. From hating poverty to becoming impatient with the poor man is not a very long step. Prosperity remains the national obsession even though observers are not wanting (Dr. Irving Fisher of Yale University happens to be the latest) to call attention to its fallacies and tell us that 90,000,000, or four-fifths of our people, despite the fair outward show, are living and working at the mercy of economic chance. To those who think deeply upon the subject there is something exasperating in the persistence of poverty, through good and bad times alike. This exasperation is especially natural in a country like our own, where the social divisions which have elsewhere permitted a social stratum gradually to form and harden, with poverty and incomplete subsistence as its vocation, do not exist. In a land where opportunity to work is assumed to wait only upon willingness, and the chance to lift oneself out of economic insecurity to depend upon persistence and thrift, it is disheartening to see each winter still bringing its appeals to the charitably minded, still revealing the existence of a large number of men and women who have not succeeded in accumulating enough substance out of the circumambient prosperity to afford them decent shelter and homely good cheer upon a day of universal feasting and rejoicing. Corporate poverty, the famine and flood whose challenge sends Red Cross workers and relief expeditions speeding over ocean and plain, is a terrible thing. Yet perhaps the utmost depth in suffering through poverty is to be looked for elsewhere. The man whose destitution is elbowed by bustling crowds of shoppers and spenders, whose utter failure to adjust himself to environment is a quite personal remorse gnawing at a quite personal heart, may have the ultimate word to speak. The social record of Lazarus is not afforded us. We lack information concerning his adenoids or tonsils, or the prenatal misfortunes that may have cast him, a beggar, at Dives' gate. We merely know that he found comfort in eternity because he had known only suffering in time.

Believers in the Poor Man of Nazareth, who face the season of His birth with the prophecy of final catastrophe ringing in their ears, will never make the mistake of regarding Lazarus as a social symptom. To them he will be the realest thing that crosses their path in a season very largely concerned with vanity and shams. All the exegesis of doctors and schoolmen will never take the sting out of the amazing assurance given us by the God-Man who conquered the world from a crib and a gallows, that, in the final assize of all, our eternal doom is to depend upon how the simple demand for food and drink, shelter and clothing, made by the man who had missed the clue to life, was met by the man who had found it. We are blinder than the blindest beggar, more foolish than the most hopeless social misfit, if, in the hands importunate or hesitant, that will be stretched out to us during the next few weeks, we do not perceive a gift surpassing in value the gold, frankincense and myrrh of the Magi. These are the people who are to lift up their heads for the first time when the stars fall and the sea comes tumbling in upon the land. Lucky shall we be then, if, pointing us out to our eternal Judge, they bid us lift up our sleek and honored heads with theirs.

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WEEK BY WEEK

SINCE Mr. Gilbert's frank criticism of the German financial situation, observers have been giving a great deal of attention to the future of the Dawes plan, especially as it will be affected by the operation of the budget during the next few years. It is almost universally conceded that the schedule calling for an increase in payments of nearly one-half in 1929 demands revision. So far the Reich has met the payments successfully and in good faith, but remains unable to raise the sums needed without drawing upon the public treasury. If, then, the demand for three-quarters of a million marks more in 1929 causes depletion of the treasury, how will the general financial condition of the country bear the strain? One is glad to see Sir Josiah Stamp, most highly respected among British economists, putting this question squarely before his countrymen and advocating a readjustment of the Dawes schedules. He holds that a reserved seat at the revision proceedings will be occupied by a representative of the United States, which country more than any other is responsible for the welcome which the plan first received. Sooner or later the problem will have to get open and serious consideration, if a new financial crisis is not to be precipitated in Europe. Why not make the business of revision a part of the work mapped out for the immediate international future?

INSIDE Coolidgedom, the word "choose" must now be paired with the word "chain." While political authorities like Senator Fess remain convinced that the President can be impelled by resolute party opinion to declare himself a candidate once again, it is only natural that somebody should try to start the ball of compulsion rolling. And what neater system can be devised than the time-honored "chain letter" method, requiring so little time and attention on the part of participants and giving everybody the impression that forcing Mr. Coolidge to return to office is an interesting and popular game? It is said that the originator of the idea dreams of gathering nearly fifteen million signatures, in other words a majority of the electors who cast national ballots. But though one doubts the likelihood of any such success, the really formidable obstacle to be surmounted is the President's own attitude of disapproval. A man in his position cannot wrathfully fling satirical abuse at his well-wishing political friends; but he has the right to expect that his sober comment upon the proposal will be respected. There is no doubting the fact of his having gained, through careful and dignified service, the respect of a great many Americans. One hopes this respect includes the belief that sly little tricks of promotion cannot alter his decision, made in the same spirit as that which has guided other Presidents confronted with the offer of a third term.

OF PARTICULAR interest is the approach which the "chain letter" system makes to a direct presidential primary. Should some fifteen million Republican voters actually sign such a petition, should Mr. Coolidge then bow to the demand and head the party ticket, the effect would be to render the convention subsidiary to electoral acclaim. And so those who have refrained, in a conservative temper of mind, from advocating any change in the Constitution's program for the choosing of Presidents, would really become the first to introduce the new method to Americans. It might work. It might even do away with colorful conventions, cheating ever so many speechmakers and correspondents out of the job of a lifetime. The chances are, however, that it will not, that the ends of the "chain" will drop from sight in some mysterious manner, and that Mr. Coolidge will retire to private life with the good will of us all. Frankly, one is now puzzled at the extreme unwillingness of many Republican leaders to accept the situation and get busy. After all, there are a number of fine possible candidates, any one of whom would be willing to endow the word "choose" with a meaning opposite to that which the White House has recently conferred upon it.

THE personality of Cardinal Bonzano, whose sudden death in Rome is mourned particularly by Catholics in the United States, combined exquisite tact with manly common sense. When he arrived in Washington as apostolic delegate during 1912, few realized that this courteous prelate, who had worked hard to perfect his mastery of the English tongue,

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would take so large a share in the advance of the Church in this country. Throughout the difficult years of war time, he carried out the diplomatic mission of the Papacy with a resoluteness that showed how earnest was the Holy See's desire for peace. Steadily and energetically he familiarized himself with the American people, coming to divine the magnitude of the American scene and of the Catholic opportunity. As a result, Rome could get from him what it had probably not obtained before—a comprehensive grasp of the United States and of the forces modifying it. Later on, as Papal legate to the Chicago Eucharistic Congress, Cardinal Bonzano brought back to this nation, as perhaps no other man could have, the appreciation of hard work accomplished in the new world. He was a man of wide experience, of sterling character and of deep religious understanding. We hope that another will be chosen for the difficult task of filling his position competently; and we permit ourselves to hope also that, just as the success of Cardinal Bonzano proves the value of an apostolic delegate to this country, so also will it suggest that an American prelate, appointed to take up permanent residence in Rome, would greatly aid the development of the American Church.

FIGHTING between the striking Colorado miners and state troops, which has injected a list of casualties into the week's news, rivets attention upon a labor conflict now extending throughout the United States. The centre of the stage is not Colorado, where the United Mine Workers were beaten in 1914, but Pennsylvania, where attempts to bring about a thorough subjugation of the miners have been in progress for some months. It is, essentially, a battle for union recognition against really formidable odds. Through heavy expenditures of money and influence, the owners have acquired the following aids in boosting dividends: an army of strike-breakers, numbering, it is said, nearly two hundred thousand and in many cases now occupying company houses from which the unionized inhabitants have been forcibly evicted; an army of defense police, privately paid for but publicly endowed with authority; and one or two of those familiar injunctions with which the law too often hurries, in such cases, to defend property. By concentrating the entire strength of the American Federation of Labor at Pittsburgh, the unionized miners have to some extent offset the financial influence which radiates from Pittsburgh. The appeal to the President is at the same time an appeal to public opinion. What a pity that the coal industry should be distinguished for its resistance to every principle of labor improvement! What a pity also, one says in passing, that the Church, rightful custodian of morals, should not now be represented in the matter by authoritative spokesmen frankly identified with the cause of the workers! Once more the appeal goes to the government as the sole dependable righter of wrong!

IF some other man made the assertions that Senator Borah is making in the course of his speechmaking campaign to write prohibition into the next Republican platform, he would be called disingenuous. In Mr. Borah's case the explanation is simply his invariable blindness to matters of common knowledge in history and politics, the strangest instance of which was his recent declaration that no period in American history was so corrupt politically as the last decade. Another man might say disingenuously what Mr. Borah says ingenuously: "If the Eighteenth Amendment cannot be enforced and the people so conclude, they will take the Eighteenth Amendment out of the Constitution." The people cannot take it out. Not even a two-thirds majority could remove it. As our Constitution stands, thirteen states containing a minority of the people are always able to prevent its repeal. Anybody but Senator Borah can name more than those thirteen which will always block that repeal, whatever the majority may desire. The situation is precisely the same with regard to the Fifteenth Amendment, now silently nullified, except that on a popular vote the unavailing and helpless majority against the Eighteenth would probably be larger than that against the Fifteenth.

IT IS not necessary to suspect the Anti-saloon League of intending corruption when it reveals that it intends to spend $5,000,000 in what the newspapers call a "drive" in the next five years. Its president, Bishop Nicholson, says that the League will conduct "an extensive educational program, utilizing newspaper, radio and moving pictures," and this does not begin to exhaust the expense account of a "legitimate" campaign. It prompts the reflection, though, that much virtuous indignation may have been unnecessarily expended on the unfortunate Senator Newberry, who was elected at a cost of about $200,000, and on Senator Vare, who ran in a large and luxurious state. Mr. Gleason, secretary of the New York State Republican Committee, was once quoted as saying that it would cost $140,000 to circularize his state for a single day. But in the case of the Anti-saloon League there is a question of deeper interest. Why is it necessary to conduct a Vare-Newberry campaign, legitimate though its expenses be, to arouse interest in a section of the Constitution? Was not the section put there by the people? Senator Borah, for one, is sure that it was. Why drum them up about it? And there is a further question: Will five years mark the end, or will this campaign become a permanent American institution? The answer is evident. There will be the same need for a campaign of "education" five and fifty years hence as there is now, and the cost is sure to mount.

AMERICAN Indians are the wards of the state, and their treatment is an affair of the national conscience. Hence the report sent to the New York

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World from Ponca City, Oklahoma, upon the terrible condition of the Ponca and Otoe tribes in that state should bring a blush of shame to the cheeks of the most hardened. Twenty-five percent of these hapless people, we are told on what seems to be good medical authority, are afflicted with tuberculosis and trachoma, from 50 to 90 percent have some phase of venereal disease, and only one in ten of the children born to the poor outcasts reaches adult age. To deal with this incredible mass of misery a single physician at $1,800 a year is said to be retained by the government. Home treatment, in view of the living conditions of the Indians, is naturally impossible, and such medical men as have secured them admission to hospitals, found themselves, the World correspondent tells us, saddled with the costs. At a moment when the oil industry is reeking in the public nostrils, a revelation of the condition to which those dispossessed through it have been reduced makes even less fragrant reading. The Chamber of Commerce of Ponca City, which is taking up the fight for decent treatment, has adopted "Raise hell!" as its slogan, and we readily forgive it its profanity.

NOW that most of the excitement regarding the "companionate marriage" recently performed in Girard, Kansas, has died down, it is clear there was nothing very unusual about the performance. Indeed the young couple, wedded as they were under circumstances over which there lay some faint shadow of religious influence, seem to have acted more decently than do the vast majority of those who "tie up" in the presence of some handy justice of the peace. What one does regret is that the parties concerned believed they had registered an advance over the usual method of procedure. It should have been obvious that matrimony contracted under such conditions was no whit better than thousands upon thousands of similar contracts entered upon with no deep regard for the sacredness of the occasion. Minus a promise to abide by the rules of the game and play it out to the end; without frank acceptance of marriage as an institution merging two individuals in one unity; without, finally, any realization that acceptance of the Divine Will is the threshold to a satisfactory and blessed life—without all these things, matrimony is only a legally dignified "affair" regardless of how many lovely words one's mother-in-law may contribute to the happy occasion.

RELIEF to harassed motorists who have been finding their progress unaccountably checked in smaller communities near New York comes in a ruling by Attorney-General Albert Ottinger that the erection of red and green signals by the boards of towns and villages is the concern of the state authorities and is not to be undertaken in future without their opinion being asked. The installation of these lights, so far as they are designed to protect life and limb, is wholly commendable. In practice they have often proved less a help than a hindrance. Many are placed in positions to the side of the road where they are not readily picked out and are likely to be confused with other lights by a stranger. Others, while easily distinguished, are placed at points where cross traffic is practically negligible and where ordinary caution would be quite sufficient to ensure safety. There is a good deal of common sense and truth in the Attorney-General's remark that "the officials of many towns and villages have become too enthusiastic over the purchase and erection of signals." Desire to emulate the great cities and keep abreast of the "safety first" movement is quite understandable. But to enforce complicated traffic rules upon open roads for no apparent reason other than the mere joy of enforcement only breeds congestion and bad temper, and moreover, causes many avoidable accidents.

WHO shall say that "taking mine ease at mine inn" is not one of the practices of civilization? Indeed Mr. Ludwig Cramer, Manhattan business man and erstwhile tenant at an apartment hotel the façade of which exudes comfort, would aver that it is a necessity. Some time before, Mr. Cramer had packed his belongings and gone to seek repose in a less glittering environment. Peace eluded his grasp, however, for several mornings later he awoke to realize that a suit had been filed against him for unpaid rent by the managers of his former residence. In reply Mr. Cramer appealed indirectly to that clause of the Constitution which promises life and the pursuit of happiness. He declared that between the noises of a theatre-going family upstairs and those of refuse cans down below, slumber and silence were impossible. Furthermore he described a neighboring resident as one "who almost nightly would have parties composed of men and women at all hours of the night, beginning as a rule about 1:30 in the morning and frequently not ending until 4, who would indulge in loud and boisterous behavior, making it impossible for the defendant to have his proper rest."

WE DO not know just what Mr. Cramer's fate at the bar of justice may be, but we are convinced no jury would deliver a verdict against him. Meanwhile one recalls, for the comfort of those who cannot seek refuge from neighboring frivolities in flight, the experience of James Gates Perceval, American poet of years gone by. Mr. Perceval was a man who loved tranquillity. He had, in fact, migrated from Yale University to what were then the wilds of Wisconsin. At the hostel where he stayed, there was a downstairs bar-room where merriment sometime waxed loud and uncouth during the wee sma' hours. Unable to endure the torture any longer, Mr. Perceval came down and with a white crayon wrote on the outer door an inscription in Greek which so frightened the revelers (mostly miners) that sobriety increased among them.

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Perhaps there is not so much difference between the miners of old Wisconsin and the night owls of New York. Who knows what a little Greek would do?

THERE will be commendations for Sir Arthur Conan Doyle's belated desire to pay his literary debts, coupled with regret that he wants to compound them and make other authors share in the payment. The report of his speech in London to the American Correspondents' Association quotes him as saying that "Poe was the great root from which the whole art of the modern short story has grown," and that "if modern authors paid only 10 percent of their debt to Poe for the erection of a statue in his honor, Poe would have a greater monument than Cheops." If other authors ever pay 10 percent of their debt to Poe, Sir Arthur should pay not less than 75 percent. His fame will rest almost wholly on his creation of Sherlock Holmes—but he did not create him. Poe created him under the name of Dupin. Doyle modernized his dress and language, gave him some captivating mannerisms, and rechristened him. He also took over Poe's other characters. Poe created the efficient but unimaginative policemen whom he called "the prefect," and Doyle took him over as Athelney Jones of Scotland Yard and spoiled him. Poe's unnamed narrator was christened Dr. Watson and gifted with an unintended obtuseness that was Doyle's only real contribution; and he completed the process by rewriting some of Poe's plots, such as The Purloined Letter. Sir Arthur should build that monument all by himself.

MAX REINHARDT

THE coming of Max Reinhardt and his version of Midsummer Night's Dream have, as one naturally expected, forced all the nicest adjectives out of critical handbags. This is not the place to add to or subtract from their number. We are happy to find that people are really pleased with this elaborate staging of a Shakespearian masque, and do not hesitate to voice their joy. It should be noted, however, that all such glad homage is emphasizing aspects of theatrical art which we have not been accustomed to consider supremely important. In all of Reinhardt's work, as conscientious German critics have not failed to note, the poet is subject to the stage manager. One may even say that the poet has a very minor part in the show, although such a charge is less correct in the case of Midsummer Night's Dream than it was, say, in The Miracle. To some extent this decline of the literary element is marked throughout the world of drama. Were we not thrilled by the intonations and gestures of Duse, although what she had to say remained a mystery? Is it not the secret of the Ziegfeld recipe that people will listen to incredibly stupid palaver, provided that what they can see on the stage is enchanting? Indeed the retreat of the whole Ibsen school of drama is probably due to the fact that beyond a certain stark and effective tragic pose it offers so perilously little for display.

One profitably bears in mind that the present hurrahing for excellent stage management and acting good to look at, is, to some extent, a healthy reaction from too great an emphasis upon literature. This last does not yet create notable drama, as sitting through any amateurish performance will demonstrate. And yet the academic critics of the past generation, for the most part aloof from Broadway and similar places, often assumed that it did. On the other hand, no one can doubt that the present indifference to the written play is to a considerable extent the result of existing theatre audiences. These will rarely listen to three acts of psychological explanation, refined impressionism or even mystical poetry. They want to be interested, stirred, aroused, satiated. And in so far as the theatre fails to supply this want, it must be prepared to see its clientèle march off toward musical comedy. One may regret this situation. The remedy, however, cannot be expected from the theatre. It must be supplied by the larger formative and educational institutions, which sometimes do not realize that what they deplore on Broadway is to a considerable degree their own fault.

In this connection one is glad to notice some sane reflections by M. Benjamin Crémieux. Writing in La Nouvelle Revue Française, this veteran critic says: "Old-fashioned theatres, built for the privileged and cultivated spectators of an older time, are perhaps anachronistic in the effort to conquer the indifference of the public. In these places the enthusiasm of the music hall or of the stadium is unknown. Yet it is enthusiasm alone which can help to 'win over' a public weary of modern psychology and introspection. The true, the only problem which, in the final analysis, we are confronting, is the problem of the stage hero, or, if you will, of the poetic theatre. That excitement which greets the first appearance of the big star in a gorgeous revue, that feeling of suspense gratified —the whole of all this our theatre has forgotten. Let us have heroes once again. Contemporary heroes are not impossible, and if not these then historical heroes, after the fashion of Shaw's Saint Joan. Let us see a revival of historical tragedy or drama, as anachronistic and actual as the plays of Corneille or Shakespeare, and so come upon the mill from which the great theatrical art of tomorrow may proceed. But whether historical or not, the drama which will triumph will be a drama before which the spectator will sit enthusiastic and ennobled, having the sentiment of a life larger than his own. We must have a theatre possessing the stature of our own tragic, legendary time. Give us plays with at least as much of the heroic appeal as one is offered by the movie or the revue."

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THE HIGHER PLANE

NEWS that the Right Reverend Thomas J. Shahan will retire from the direction of the Catholic University of America, a post he has filled so quietly and efficiently during more than eighteen years, ought to be read by every Catholic with deep searching of the heart. Bishop Shahan belonged, as a young man, to a small group of American priests who exemplified an interest in scholarship and religious culture far above the average of what had prevailed before. They were enthusiastic but they were also scrupulously erudite. They saw the here and now, but they likewise knew the safe, steadfast, dream-bordered ways of the old world. To them we owe a great deal of the courage with which American Catholic education has carried on for many years; to them we owe also the Catholic Encyclopedia, beyond all doubt the pinnacle of American Catholic intellectual achievement. Bishop Shahan himself became a historian of merit, although one feels that his published work is only part of what he might have accomplished if a veritable downpour of practical things had not left him with so little leisure.

The time has now come to ask what is the achievement which the able men represented by Bishop Shahan can look back upon. The fairest answer to this query is, of course, the Catholic University itself. During recent years it has expanded greatly, witnessing the erection of many substantial new buildings, the gathering of books and documents for an unusually helpful library, and the partial carrying through of such projects as the building of the National Shrine of the Immaculate Conception. Round about the University there now clusters a little world of religious houses, each devoted to the training of priests. One look at the institution proves (incidentally) that although the financial endowment is not comparable with the munificence which has created such places as Yale and Harvard, American Catholics have been very generous with money given in support of education. Bishop Shahan has consistently manifested ability to stimulate this willingness to give and assist.

Of course there is a human resultant apart from, higher than, these outward signs of prosperity. Can one believe that the University is today a plot in which the seed sown by Bishop Shahan and his generation has germinated and multiplied? Has the standard represented by the rector now leaving been maintained? One may say that many worthy leaders and scholars have rallied in support of the cause. It is true, however, that these and the whole of Catholic academia have been driven by the force of circumstances into a maelstrom of pedagogy, unrelieved by many hours of leisurely calm. All our intellectuals have been obliged to offer tremendous sacrifices of time and energy on that altar of "mass education" which is so exacting everywhere in the United States. The actual state of affairs is revealed very clearly in the Catholic University's decision to build up a large undergraduate college. This step was found to be an indispensable prelude to advancement. The full development of a university cannot be achieved today through graduate faculties alone.

The future of the great Catholic foundation in Washington cannot be a matter of indifference to any thinking American. Everyone hopes to witness there a virile gathering of men interested with all their souls in that "vie raisonnable" which Bossuet proposed as an ideal of the Christian life. Round them the currents of our thinking and creative activity ought to eddy, and for them no undergraduate class-room, however densely packed with individuals, can substitute. The rightness of this point of view becomes apparent when one surveys the whole American scene. Our "systems of education" are everywhere growing and expanding. Each year brings to a host of American colleges larger crowds, more buildings, a greater number of subjects and auditoriums. Never before was there so much danger that the quality of intellectual leadership would suffer under the impact of "quantity production." It is a situation which one cannot envisage without taking fright, seeing as one does how vast a respect for scholarly authority is entertained by the newly and rapidly educated sections of our population. Catholics have especial reasons for not remaining heedless of the matter, and for doing all they can to foster that leisure which is bred of time to study, reflect and create.

All of us might well ponder, therefore, the "report" on graduate studies which Dean Frederick Woodbridge of Columbia University recently presented to his president. In this a frank statement that "from two-thirds to three-quarters of our graduate students are negligibles" is made, without, of course implying any radical human deficiency in those criticized. The point is rather, as Dean Woodbridge expresses it, that "in graduate schools it is not students, but professors, who need the greater attention." That is, research and creative activity in this day and age are not compatible with the hard daily grind of pedagogy. We have undoubtedly come to think that the public curiosity in regard to poetry and the sciences, often commendable but often also merely an aspect of a yearning for social advancement, should absorb all the energy of the scholar. We have thought that in Catholic circles particularly. We have often, as a result, debased the position of the scholar and the creative artist. We have come to seem to want education, but not the educated man. Well, it is a pleasure (though it is also a sad duty) to say that the rector now leaving the Catholic University was first of all this educated man—and not primarily an educator, an organizer or an administrator. This is his best title—for one reason because it has grown exceedingly rare.

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EUROPE'S CALL TO YOUTH

By J. BALINSKI JUNDZILL

DURING the first anniversary of the armistice, on November 11, 1919, the Confédération Internationale des Étudiants was founded at Strasbourg for the purpose of uniting the university youth of the allied countries, and of maintaining the spirit of friendship and of comradeship that had been created on the battlefields. Successive anniversaries (one of them lies but a few weeks behind us) have necessarily abated the poignancy with which these young men celebrated their deliverance, not alone from death, but from a menace which rendered all plans for the future vain and illusory. The mere fact that but one year was allowed to pass before the crowning mercy was made fruitful in good works is eloquent of the spirit and optimism that inspired a generation literally "saved as by fire."

A year later in 1920, the students of the neutral countries who joined the movement widened and deepened the aim which had been conceived at Strasbourg. It is toward the students of former enemy countries that the efforts of the Confederation have been directed and, from the first, reconciliation was its program.

The passing of a few years has been necessary to make people take heed of the enormous upheavals caused in Europe by the war. Events have been far in advance of thought. For instance, in the realm of economic life, the phenomena of inflation and of deflation passed far beyond the experience of pre-war days. If this is true, how much more difficult has been the orientation, after this great upheaval, in problems of a social, political, or even of a cultural nature. Here is the expression of the situation given by one of the foremost Catholic thinkers of France* who characterize our times:

> The words of Benedict XV upon "the suicide of Europe" have a meaning that reaches further than many people think. . . . There was a time when every European boy or girl born into the world benefited from a sap of acquired humanity which nourished him, carried him through life, educated him and supported him at need. . . .The youth of today strolls about the province of his own human nature as though he were in a museum. . . . He sees so many masterpieces! Is it surprising that an impulse to shatter them seizes on him? When we are strangers to ourselves, can we wonder that nothing seems strange to us, or that every form of human achievement arouses, in exactly the same degree, either our curiosity or our boredom?

This pessimistic picture of the disorder of the youth of today surely has as its deep-rooted cause the relativity of values which were shaken by the tremendous ordeal. All of that which was formerly gentleness, beauty, form in life, has lost its meaning. Where can we turn? How can we solve the social crisis, the economic crisis? In what way can we regulate relations between nations, if we do not even know what form to give to national life? In a way, when we think of the situation in that part of the world, we are justified in repeating with the same philosopher:

> Our souls are naked. All their vesture, silk and wool alike, all the riches of our secular humanity . . . are falling into shreds and tatters around us.

The situation seems deplorable—but the sources of life retain their vigor. The very conditions imposed by a life at once arid and difficult necessitate effort, stimulate thought and turn it back to seek for depth. It cannot confine itself to the examination and study of problems of secondary importance. The ordeal has forced it to penetrate to the very foundations of existence. In the political sphere, it will not be a matter of discussing such a problem as the legislation for elections, but rather of the whole parliamentary crisis. Radicalism does not present itself today merely as a movement of opinion. It touches, most assuredly, the form of the state and of communist society; in the economic sphere the principle of property is brought into the light of discussion. I could cite merely the problem of agrarian reform for which the necessity is real, and yet the putting into practice of which brings with it a certain danger because it infringes on the principle of property.

Thus, in all regions of life, a problem is set before us which is of the first importance and upon the solution of which, it is evident, the future of civilization, not to say its permanence, must depend. It needs no great foresight to see that in the contest which must ensue when the new ideas meet the old, youth, and particularly the educated youth of our European universities, is called on to play a major part. Vain will all the efforts be of the statesmen who meet periodically to lay down rules of international and social conduct designed to avert future armed conflicts and revolutions, if, in the generation who will have these rules to apply to given cases, a spirit of coöperation between nation and nation has not already been instilled.

It is precisely this spirit which the International Confederation of Students has aimed to supply. Today, it unites in its activities thirty-one countries, including all the former belligerent nations. Coöperation among the organized student bodies of all lands for better international understanding and a more thorough international education of the student world is at present the definite objective of the

*Jacques Maritain, Primauté du Spirituel, pages 154, 155.

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Confederation. Its organization is simple. It is a federation of national unions of students which, once a year, send delegates to international congresses. An executive committee composed of ten members is elected by the congress to serve for two years. This executive committee watches over the activity of the Confederation which is concentrated in five permanent offices: the General Secretariat, the Commission for International Relations and Travel, the Commission for Student Relief, the Commission on Scientific Matters, and lastly, the General Commissariat for inter-university athletics.

The activity of the Confederation from 1919 to 1927, apart from the work of reconciliation with students of the ex-belligerent countries, has consisted in creating national unions in seventeen countries; in organizing nine international student congresses; in organizing student travel and student exchanges in Europe and the Near East, and intercontinental student tours including Europe, South Africa, the United States and Canada; the introduction of an international student identity card, approved by the League of Nations, for reductions in visas and railroad fares; the handling of questions and inquiries concerning education, the equivalence of diplomas in different countries; problems of student employment and future careers; competition in inter-university athletics and games (at Warsaw in 1924, at Rome in 1927.) This is a brief summary of the activities of the organization.

The students of this country joined the movement some months ago, during the ninth international congress at Rome. They had already established at Princeton in 1925, a National Student Federation of America. This organization is comparatively young, and differs in some ways from those in Europe. The differences are caused by conditions in this country and by the different educational methods which prevail here. On this account, then, coöperation can prove all the more effective and fruitful, and the contribution of America can be all the more useful to the development of the international organization.

In one respect the Confederation is singularly fortunate. It comes at what is clearly seen now to be an era of intellectual crisis, and has become a rallying point for tendencies that were hardly defined even eight years ago at the date of its foundation. What characterizes the Catholic youth of modern universities is the return to a study of Catholic doctrine—a trust that herein will be found the answer and solution. It is necessary only to cite the problem of the Action Française movement, which, whatever one may think of its later history, has certainly recruited adherents among the intellectual Catholic youth of France. I shall mention Fascism in Italy which finds its supporters primarily among the young. Holland, too, furnishes an extremely interesting case; this country of Germanic culture is a curious example of spiritual reaction against forms of life that are far too material. The unfolding of Catholicism in that country, the rôle played by her Catholic university, indicate new tendencies which manifest themselves likewise most heartenningly in other countries that are of Protestant formation.

There is, therefore, a return to the ancient doctrine; and something more than a return. It is the search in this doctrine for solutions applicable to the difficulties of present-day life. The Angelic Doctor sees the ranks of his students increase. Also, never has the voice of Rome been heard with such attention as today; and obedience to the duties it implies is more precious because more enlightened and more intelligent than before.

Without doubt, among actualities of urgent importance, there is the realization of the work of peace in two respects: the establishment among the nations of relations that are normal, regular and continuous; the establishment of relations founded on rules that are acceptable to all. What a vast field for thought! Then there is the preparation of opinion and of daily activity based on the results of intellectual activity. In this sphere, the work of the intellect is plainly marked: to define the limits of a nation, showing what, in essence, it is; to perceive the goal of a nation's existence; to make clear the form of society and the limitation of the prerogatives of the members of this society in order that life in common may be made possible and at the same time peaceable. Here, too, Catholic thought and what it has produced permit us to construct the new order. Organization has become a necessity. Material conditions have attacked even the university group in society. A coöperation has been needed to conquer those conditions, and we have known how to face the difficulties. More than this, we have known how to draw out through practical experience that which is essential in all ideas of organization.

In the same fashion and in a wider field, practical conditions have made it much easier to comprehend the point of interdependence at which the nations have arrived. We have organized in the university world in order to attain this understanding. I shall mention only two organizations: the Confédération Internationale des Étudiants, the Pax Romana. But there are others. In them are discussed the problems mentioned above. The Catholics try particularly to penetrate them and to make respected, following the expression of the encyclical Ubi Arcano Dei, "the sacred rights of God in human society."

They are conscious that it is the only way to emerge from the disorder into which the world has been plunged, precisely because it had forgotten those rights. And it is astonishing and wonderful to note that they are aided by that very nudity with which the spirit of Europe has arisen from the crisis of modern life. In the midst of so many problems and so many difficulties, orientation is made clearer, and thought can take its rightful place of leadership.

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HOW PROTESTANTS SEE US
II. THE CONFESSIONAL

By J. ELLIOT ROSS

LAST week I told of a group of Protestants organized at Fairfield under the leadership of The Inquiry to study their prejudices against Catholics. The story was carried up to the point when the group decided that the question of main interest for them was the confessional, and they undertook to read certain Paulist pamphlets bearing on this matter and some articles in the Catholic Encyclopedia.

After this reading, the group proceeded to formulate the values of the confessional as they saw them, as well as their objections to this Catholic practice. This point of leading a group to study the good in any particular doctrine or practice is an important part of the technique of discussion. No other one thing has a greater influence in producing a sympathetic understanding of the other man's point of view.

It would be too much to expect, of course, that no difficulties and objections would remain. But The Inquiry report tells us that when the group came to determine the questions they would ask a priest, they

> felt it incumbent upon them to be less muddled in their own thinking, and the further fact that this priest was coming alone and unsupported to define and explain the Catholic position inspired them with the need of showing fair play during the conference. There seems to be a code of chivalry even among religious lions, so that when a Daniel, unarmed and alone, dares to descend among them, they never show their teeth!

There were ten questions formulated on the confessional. And it must be remembered, as the report points out, that

> not a single question was proposed which was obviously intended to be tricky. Every one was proposed in all honesty. All of them were drawn up by the corporate activity of the group itself and formulated, not by Protestant theologians seeking to lay a trap for their adversaries, but by Protestant laymen in an honest effort to understand the situation as outlined in available Catholic literature.

Some of the questions will, no doubt, seem strange to some Catholics. They are unable to understand how intelligent Protestants can have such ideas about Catholics. But the first step toward understanding is to know what the other man thinks, and if intelligent Protestants are thinking these things it is well for us to know it. Only so can we ever take steps to enlighten them. Here are the questions:

1. What actually happens during confession?
2. Is forgiveness freely given, or is it necessary to pay something?
3. Does the priest actually know who is confessing to him? If not, how can he give valuable advice?
4. Is adequate instruction given as to the confessional, so that misconceptions which ignorant Catholics might have are avoided?
5. Is not the system of the confessional so mechanical as really to prevent those who practise it from feeling that deep sense of sin which characterized our Puritan ancestors?
6. In actual practice, does not the sacrament of penance encourage Catholics to take a light view of sin, since they believe that they can be easily forgiven?
7. Suppose we grant that voluntary and occasional confession might be a good thing; what are the arguments in favor of compulsory confession?
8. Does not the confessional system take away from people independence of thought and consequently interfere with the right education of the conscience?
9. Is it not weak-minded to run to others with your sins instead of bearing them yourselves?
10. Is not the whole system—confession and indulgences—opposed to the tenor of the teaching of Christ, Who forgave sins freely, broke laws Himself, drove the money-changers (with all their bookkeeping) out of the temple, and said nothing at any time to imply a score-keeping of temporal punishment to be expiated?

The next meeting—the seventh—was given up entirely to the conference with the priest. The report says regarding it:

> An atmosphere of cordiality and friendliness toward the priest and of the priest toward the members was something that will not be forgotten by any of those present. Nevertheless, with this cordiality, there was perfect frankness and even at times some vigorous discussion, especially at one point when one of the members of the group objected to the Catholic practice of "indoctrinating" the mind of the child. The entire discussion lasted for over two hours and was not concluded before every one of the Protestant members had a much clearer idea of the Catholic doctrines and practices regarding confession, and a realization that the Catholic system was not to be derided even by those who found themselves compelled to reject it.

One of the most interesting features of the meeting was the fact that the discussion was not all one-sided. On some points, certain of the members took the Catholic position against their Protestant confrères. This was particularly noticeable on the point of "indoctrinating" children, noted in the above quotation. Several men said frankly they thought the Catholic Church was right and they only wished their own Church would follow her example. Such frankness would be impossible in a big gathering in a hall,

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and it is a striking confirmation of the wisdom of The Inquiry in forming small groups. It takes a great deal more work, but surely fifty groups of twenty members each will accomplish vastly more than one group of a thousand.

The flavor of this meeting can best be gathered, perhaps, from the words of one of the members quoted in the report:

> Six meetings, words and more words! Old conceits and prejudices dragged from the cobwebs of our brains; a few of them obliterated or softened, but the scars in evidence.
>
> Seventh meeting: climax. Atmosphere charged with a lively interest. Upon invitation of our leader, a priest had agreed to discuss with us this subject from his viewpoint. This distinguished guest came, gave each in turn a hearty handclasp, smilingly spoke a cordial greeting.
>
> The spotlight had been thrown upon the screen! The background created by the previous meetings which had seemed to lack cohesion was quickly brought into the foreground; instantly the mystic shadows cleared away and a real form took shape. The group was made to see that the ideals of the Roman Catholic Church which had been under criticism are noble and inspiring in themselves. We had to admit that.

The last meeting was devoted to a review of what had taken place, and to securing from the members a written statement of their reactions. As these statements are printed in the report, we have a fairly good basis on which to form an estimate of the results of this experiment. And as The Inquiry is already in touch with more than fifty religious leaders planning groups similar to the Fairfield one, and as there are prospects of many more, we may well spend a little time in studying the Fairfield reaction. What were the results from the standpoint of bringing about a better understanding between Catholics and Protestants?

On the whole, the results seem to be decidedly encouraging. First of all, the members got a new conception of the sacramental system of the Catholic Church, and particularly of the confessional. Instead of the traditional Protestant bogy, it came out as a practice for which a great deal could be said as having been instituted by Christ, and at least having certain practical values from a moral and psychological viewpoint. As two different members phrased it:

> The logic of its [the Church's] theory is apparent to me now, and the care with which it guards the morals of its faithful. . . .

> I do not believe there is a member of the group who does not consider the meetings have been helpful. We have learned how little we truly know of our own or another's religion. Those of us who have sought to understand the questions outlined have gained much through the study thereof. Many matters have been cleared up, for me at least, that I doubtless should never have inquired into—as smug as the average Catholic in believing "ours is right."

Secondly, the discovery that they had to such a large extent misunderstood one point of Catholic faith and practice, will carry over to other questions. The members of this group will be suspicious of traditional Protestant views of Catholic belief concerning the infallibility of the Pope, the relations between Church and state, devotion to the saints, and numerous other points. One of the members put this exceedingly well when she wrote:

> We started with plenty of prejudices in our midst—that was plain. I, for one, could almost see it evaporate as we went on, and the meeting with Father X was the climax of the process. At that meeting we were sincerely seeking understanding—there was no airing of biased opinion. That healthful change in our viewpoint is the chief accomplishment, I think, and no small thing, "select" though our group may have been. We have a sounder basis of judgment of unconsidered statements about the Roman Catholic "menace" and our own influence will in the future be exerted toward countering such statements rather than adding to their effect. . . . A little knowledge may have its danger, but it is surely better than much hearsay. No one can ever tell us again that the Church is vicious in principle.

Finally, the members of this group will have a more sympathetic feeling toward their Catholic friends and toward Catholics generally. This is touched on specifically in the statements of several members. One of them writes:

> In general, more appreciation of and a more tolerant attitude toward Catholic beliefs and practices. . . a strengthening of my respect and friendships for two or three pretty close Catholic friends.

Another says:

> Meetings similar to ours last Friday evening conducted by scholars of like character to Father X would soon remove most of our doubts and arouse an urge for a more friendly fellowship.

And all this, it seems, is distinctly to the good. It is along the very lines suggested by the Pope. Surely his paternal heart would be thrilled by such meetings among the Eastern Christians, such opportunities for putting Catholic doctrine before them. And shall we not praise here what he would praise there?

As far as one can judge from this report, the Fairfield Experiment was eminently worthwhile. Of course, a great deal depended in this instance upon the leader. Under a less experienced man, one who knew less about Catholicism and Catholic literature, or one who had less devotion to the cause of pure truth, the experiment might have been disastrous. Prejudices might have been deepened instead of being eradicated.

But with this report as a guide, the multiplication of similar groups elsewhere should result in enormous gains for a better understanding between Catholics and Protestants. The Inquiry has done a great ser-

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vice in blazing the way. The hints it gives for the formation of groups, the tests to be submitted, the questions to be answered, would seem to be such efficient helps that less capable leaders than the one at Fairfield can now succeed.

It comes, therefore, as good news that The Inquiry is already in touch with more than fifty religious leaders in various parts of the country, who plan similar groups this winter. And there are indications that, once this report is known, there will be numerous other interested people forming groups. There is no end to the possibility for good. It is something that we can watch with interest, and for whose success and spread we can pray. For it seems to be almost in answer to the words of Pius XI with which these papers opened. Nothing that has come to my attention recently seems better calculated to break down the bigotry due to ignorance—and that is 90 percent of the bigotry in this country.

But it is hardly sportsmanlike to imply that all the misunderstanding is on one side. Encouraged by the Pope's acknowledgment that "Catholics also sometimes lack a just appreciation of their brethren," may we not admit a mote in our eye, when we see a beam in our neighbor's? The Holy Father has said:

> It is necessary to know and to love one another. We must know one another, because the failure of reunion work is so often due, in great part, to the lack of mutual acquaintance between the two parties. If there are prejudices on both sides, then it is necessary that these prejudices should cease. Errors, misunderstandings, which persist and are repeated against the Catholic Church . . . seem incredible. But Catholics also sometimes lack a just appreciation of their brethren; they lack fraternal charity, because they lack acquaintance with these groups. One does not know all that there is of preciousness, of good, of Christianity, in these fragments of ancient Catholic truth.

THE CROSS ON THE HOUSETOP

By GEORGE N. SHUSTER

(The following is taken from The Catholic Spirit in America, Mr. Shuster's latest book, published this week by the Dial Press, New York City.—The Editors.)

THE humanizing of a great industrialized population is as big a job as the attainment of industrial justice. Here again modern circumstances have introduced baffling complexities. In the first place, agencies relied upon with a kind of blind faith have displayed results far less regal than what had been anticipated. We had hoped that a knowledge of how to read and write would in some mysterious way enlarge the intelligence of the average citizen. Instead the major profit seems to be that which has flowed into the cashboxes of the spectacle trade. Plain as day also is the tremendous financial success—constantly increasing at that—of "organs of opinion," the pictures in which cater to prejudice and instinct, the text of which inculcates everything that education was instituted to drive out of society, and the primary function of which is to force to the wall, through a process of consolidation, the papers and periodicals which once served a discriminating public. Similarly, we had expected that extension of the franchise would imply a more intense civic consciousness, a greater generosity on behalf of the common welfare. We now find that large sections of the population do not care enough for the vote to use it, while other sections sell theirs for so little that one fancies them unacquainted with the high cost of living.

In the second place, the country districts—farms and small towns—are nearly as "industrial" as the cities themselves. Their prosperity is determined by markets beyond their control; their habits are acquired, not traditional; and the system of training which they are counseled to evaluate so highly draws the sap of youth from their bones. Everywhere, in short, a reckless attempt to reckon everything in terms of "economic law" has meant so great a disregard for human values that these have well-nigh been submerged. And with human values religion also tends to disappear. Indeed, though there is something poetic in many forms of the socialistic movement, and though the luxuries upon which accumulated wealth can be expended are occasionally brought into the periphery of the arts, the recession of beauty and the humanities generally out of the lives of modern men is almost exactly proportionate to the abandonment of every kind of vigorous religious truth.

On the other hand, it is imperative that wherever the religious impulse does subsist it should realize its creative function, knowing meanwhile that in so doing, it is not concerned with mere extraneous matters but with a task thoroughly its own. We may well believe that when this impulse is genuinely alert in society it will ask and attempt to answer the same questions which society in attempting to ask and answer. How do people live? What is done to see that their work absorbs rather than deadens intelligence, the distinctive characteristic of man? In what way do the places in which they labor represent stages in the general hoped-for upward development of humanity? Of course there are other questions, but these few have been asked so often and answered so gloomily that they may be considered as putting into interrogative form some of the basic social concerns of the era.

No doubt the "way" in which people live is largely

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determined by the character of the family fireside. A house is the most fundamental form of civilized private property. Until recently, western men all instinctively desired a small place to call their "own," into which the progress of domestic life could be incorporated as neatly as a picture is put into a frame. The rise of the great industrial city, however, rendered this desire incapable of realization. When a million or more citizens do their work inside a compact area, they find going great distances to and fro a real hardship. Various projects of decentralization to the contrary notwithstanding, the fact remains that as soon as a people accepts industry it also necessarily accepts the city. The only thing that can be done is to make the most of such opportunities as are afforded —a "most" that is certainly not being attempted today. The gamut from squalor to pretentious ugliness, from the crowded tenement to the three dainty rooms no child will ever invade, from the row of dilapidated brown-stone residences to the cheap monotony of the suburban development—this is a line of degradation, not of progress.

Similarly, the skyscraper as such is obviously not a solution of contemporary architectural problems. It may be a solution, provided the tremendous aspiration of its structural form is genuinely the expression of something human—not necessarily a religious something, but at least a spiritual idea. No doubt certain of the tall buildings which have arisen (during moments when cheap craftsmanship did not guide the mapping out of floor-space for some getter of quick riches) do convey a new vision of beauty, a novel and potentially sound mastery of the problem of city residence. But we have not yet realized that this skyscraper crammed with office folk is, like the factory, the meeting-place of a community of men and women between whom there exists at least a solidarity of circumstance. The problem is to make that solidarity something more vital and significant—not to deplore it, and decidedly not to waste time regretting the skyscraper or the factory. After all, what many of us have seen of the famous "small tradesmen" of Europe leaves the impression that most of them labored during impossibly long hours in damp and crowded quarters which induced disease and ignorance. By comparison the skyscraper and the factory are hopeful projects, if as yet nothing more.

It is not difficult to see for the Church a more important place in this new scheme of things than it has, as yet, occupied. If we are going to be mediaeval, why not face the fact that the important thing was not the Gothic eaves-spout but the cathedral? This was not merely a religious centre, but a place round which all of life—including economics—pulsed strongly. It was not alone a matter of bringing thousands of men together for the work of construction. The cathedral was also a place in the neighborhood of which business was transacted, as witness the purpose to which the open square before the church is today subjected in every old European town. Men did not think, in mediaeval days, of the church as a place near which one went on Sunday mornings, but as a common centre round which life hummed and through which one would arrive at the larger, everlasting life. In our own time it is always a little harrowing to find an expensive basilica rising in the midst of a cluster of squalid industrial hovels, never managing to be more than the scene of a hurried and poorly understood liturgy, and so remote from the normal businesses of men that all are hushed when they come near it, as if it were not merely something sacred but also something very strange.

I believe it not unlikely that we shall witness, in some more active years to come, a closer identification of the space occupied by religion and labor. Already a Spanish company has planned to inclose within its New York office building a chapel where daily Mass will be celebrated, and where, therefore, the idea of nearness to God and to the ultimate necessary human enterprise will mingle with the purposes of toil a little more intimately than is now the case. One can dream of many groups of salaried people in giant skyscrapers, of workers in shops and factories, demanding in unison that there be somewhere in the "house" a little room where, as Mr. Chesterton has it, "God sits all the year." If armies have their tents given over to worship, if the rural village—where it still abides—has its central spire, why should not these varied city armies possess their little inner citadel, the minister in which mingles daily with those he serves, thus coming close to the model of "fisherman" which was set for him in the beginning? Similarly, one fancies builders of new structures doing their work more carefully and humanly because they sense that the aspiration of the form flung skyward will be not merely commercial but religious and everlasting as well. A dream all this is, possibly; and yet, surely, it is a little, feeble dream compared with those vast hopes which raised themselves in the heart of infant Christendom.

Similarly, it is not unlikely (certainly it is desirable) that the Church itself will come to feel that its proper attitude is not theoretic doctrine about the domestic "way" in which people live, but leadership that is also community action. Why should not houses of worship come to be built primarily as places of residence? Fancy a city in which there was a beautiful common central cathedral; a number of supplementary basilicas and churches, erected to honor saints or to afford an object to private beneficence; and finally, numerous great apartment houses or residence hotels, in which a spacious chapel incorporated into the structure would serve as the common religious meeting-place of those dwelling under the same roof—at least of the Catholics dwelling there, for these houses might profitably be open to all. The idea may seem novel, but it is really only a transfer to the realm of family living of a custom which prevails in

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almost every convent and many "homes" for bachelors and aging people. One cannot doubt that such an arrangement would bring religion closer to actual life and that in turn it would make people more actual to the churches (for the problem is not a Catholic one merely) than is now altogether customary.

Finally also, if there be no escape from accepting the modern factory and commercial district as the hubs round which life revolves, it is apparent that here and nowhere else the knot must be tied which will link mankind with cultural sources. Just as religion has in some degree grown stiffened and static under mechanistic pressure, a form of life apart from all others, so certainly the varied arts and philosophies are all too closely walled inside museums and herbariums. How can ownership of masterpieces of painting and sculpture be really public if they are locked up in places to which the public seldom comes? In Chicago, for instance, it takes exactly one hour of difficult and tiring travel to come in from Englewood to the magnificent structure on Michigan Avenue which houses so much finished artistic inspiration. If a man knows what this inspiration is worth, or like the queer creature that used to walk about the Louvre has decided to live and die with Mona Lisa, no difficulty will restrain him from constant pilgrimages. The ordinary citizen, however, does not know; and supposing that curiosity has brought him some one time into the museum, he will stare at the huddled canvases in amazement and go away satisfied that he has "got art" enough for a lifetime.

If we are really determined to make use of our accumulated wealth in beautiful creative handiwork, if we are also anxious to make our people love something better than mere instinct attaches it to, then we shall sometime or other learn a lesson from the middle-ages and take what we have to the places where life is lived. I can conceive of factory-workers lingering for a while as they go home through a long, lighted corridor to gaze a little at Correggios and Sargents loaned for a while and hung as the majesty of their forms and colors deserve. I can imagine community chapels, of the kind described previously, decorated with borrowed Rubenses or Maurice Denis transfigurations of religious hope, I can think of an endless succession of such expositions succeeding themselves in an endless number of factories and office buildings. Here, after all, are the men and women in whose hearts a zest for the spell of beauty still lingers sufficiently strong to give them pleasure in gracious things owned in common rather than collected to adorn a sumptuous, successful winter home.

THE BEST ENGLISH

By RICHARD BURTON

BEST English is simply the English the best handlers of English use. The statement sounds elementary, too easy a way out of the woods. Yet if it be clung to, it will prove a very lamp unto our feet. And such a summary subdivides into four heads: it includes a consideration of the best speakers of the past and of the present; and similarly, of the best writers, whether bygone or contemporary.

In examining the best handlers of English in the past, we see at once that one of our four aspects of English use instantly ceases to exist. For such writers are only those who survive on the printed page, since all the speakers have fallen silent to our ears. And what a loss is there, my countrymen! Could we but hear the colloquial language of an earlier time, listen to the intonation of the voices now choked with dust, catch the infinite gradations of inflection, the nuances of modulation—what a boon it were in our general study of speech! That is why such a registration as Fanny Burney's Journal, wherein that sprightly eighteenth-century lady sets down the talk of Sam Johnson, is so precious a find. But—no, we must, in general, learn how our forefathers talked from their speech as it is written down and preserved for us in books. And the loss is doubly realized when we consider that all idiom in its full salt and savor comes from spoken utterance, and that the best written language is that which comes closest to catching the inimitable accent that falls warm from the lips of men.

When the writer is first-class, his pen acts as his word of mouth; and we turn to him and linger with him in the recognition of a fundamental linguistic fact: that here, if anywhere, we shall draw nearest to the origin of all idiom—namely, in the mouths of men. Addison and Steele, for example, were charmingly idiomatic makers of literature. Nobody now living ever heard them talk, no mechanical device to perpetuate their tones existed. But reading those authors in the Spectator Papers, we find them so fluent, forceful, felicitous, that we easily are convinced of their standing among the few for the happy use of those turns of expression natural to our English tongue at one of its best periods. Yet nothing is surer than that, if we could have sat with them at the Garrick Club over a bottle of wine, their actual conversation would have differed somewhat from even the most idiomatic of their beloved essays. Their exact speaking use of English is forever lost to us; we do the best we can with the substitute of the printed page representing their natural way of saying things when a quill was in hand and the printer's devil waited.

And what range, variety, rich divergencies and individualistic departures this idiomatic exhibition displays! As many styles, so it would seem, as there

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are writers whose genius enables them to hand on to us examples of their instinct for the mot juste, their sensibility to the music of sentences, their flashing inventions and their loving revivals of some old word or pregnant phrase, clothed anew with their own personality.

Any man's style depends on a synthesis; the concurrence of his nationality, his period, his training, his personality and the form of letters he elects to follow and produce. It is thus a very complex thing, and the trouble with almost all scholastic treatment of the problem lies in the silly assumption that style is the direct result of obeying this rule or that, the negative avoidance of a series of "don'ts." No master of literature on the side of expression ever arrived at the front by such an emasculate substitution for the true excellences of artistic speech. That is why those excellences are many-sided. Think of the contrast between the eighteenth century worthies already mentioned, and the large, rugged, vital vernacular of the Elizabethans. Think of the Norman French of fourteenth-century Chaucer qualifying the backbone of his English, which is nevertheless such as to make him the first great artist of English verse. And set beside these the nervous, homely, effective, modern idiom of a Sherwood Anderson in our day, or the seeming-simple yet infinitely cunning manner of a George Moore—and you begin to sense the remarkable gamut of English utterance during the thousand years from the Anglo-Saxon chronicles to the present year of grace.

But one thing may always be kept in mind, to clarify the whole subject; English has ever had a certain way of saying things; and all the changes rung by the centuries of English development in speech use do not depart from that bottom fact. The authors whom we instinctively recognize as standard are those very authors who, whether by birth, gift, education, instinct or what you will, have come closest to reporting in their utterance this distinctive, peculiar way of expressing thought through the native tongue. It is true that slang, which often is but idiom in the making, may come and go: each generation, each decade indeed, plays favorites in respect of locutions, turns of speech, manner of expression. But deep down, like the skeleton of an organism the flesh and blood of which is subject to the superficial changes of all living creatures, one may find the English way of saying things, an instinct, a law and an inescapable requirement.

Idiom, therefore, is the precious inheritance personally varied by good writers according to their genius, their aim and the compulsion of their theme. But no writer, however eminent, can afford to say things in a way not English, at bottom. Even so fine an artist as the late Henry James violated this principle in his last writings: there are sentences in some of his fiction, when he wrote in what has been called his third manner, which read like a translation from another tongue, not the embodiment of inherited vernacular at all. In some of his latest novels, Mr. Ford Madox Ford gives further illustration of the statement, by using a jargon that most surely departs from all genuinely legitimate traditions.

In considering the best English of the present, we have an advantage over a study of the past in the fact, pointed out before, that we can study both those who speak and those who write. Current oratory, table-talk of excellence, the language of drama which, with oratory, preserves the oral tradition in speech usage, these all can aid us in coming to some comprehension of idiom at its best. Hence it is important to give our close attention to the spoken word in its favorable examples. Today, if we say that somebody "talks like a book," it sounds like a reproach or a criticism. In all my acquaintance, I recall but two human beings to whom the remark applies. These twain add to the fluidity of the spoken word the heightened elegance and the distinctly increased formality familiar to us in written utterance. To hear someone occasionally speak after such fashion is a refreshing change from the deluge of slovenly expression most of us, in haste, in carelessness, in unconscious return, perhaps, to early bad habits, commonly indulge ourselves in. Nevertheless it may be named one of the genuine contributions of our particular period that we have so daringly handled the vernacular when transplanted to the printed page. We have in our writing more closely imitated the verity of the spoken word than any preceding age: that is our virtue—but also our peril, and often our sin.

In the praiseworthy attempt to destroy the artificiality of the past, to bring spoken and written idiom together in such blend that the distinction between them wellnigh disappears, we have fallen into the pit-fall of incoherence, lack of form, shapeless manipulation of material, and sometimes a sort of short-hand instead of the rounded perfection of utterance that, after all, must distinguish sound writing. We have substituted styleless condensation for style in any true sense. This graceless writing overlooks the fact of the difference between the spoken and written word. To bring them closer together is good, and makes for idiom. To assume they are literally the same only invites disaster.

The lingo used for stage directions in the plays just preceding our immediate day affords illustrative evidence. We owe it to latter-day leaders like Shaw and Barrie that a reform in this respect has been introduced, so that this cryptic special language, outside the dialogue of the play, becomes a vital, agreeable part of the piece as a literary achievement. The kind of writing represented by "enter Brown, upper right entrance, comes down front to chair at left," bids fair to fall into desuetude under the influence of dramatists who now recognize that their wares are to be purchased in books for the more careful scrutiny of print: an appeal not existing in earlier days, when stage business was indicated primarily for the instruction of the producer, not for the reader's pleasure. It is thus the business of those interested in sound speech to keep

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a knowing eye upon the current word, idiom, phrase or larger organic handling of the native tongue, and not to make the mistake of thinking we should only begin the observation and study of expression after it is registered on the printed page. The best oratory or public speaking, in forensic debate, in the pulpit, in civic life, in the class room and on the lecture platform today, tends to exhibit the realistic habit of a closer fitting of the thought to the word. This is but part of the general, deep-seated movement of literature toward truth, the stern elimination of the flowery and the highfalutin' more common in an earlier day.

To realize the change, one has but to go back to the once admired speeches of Webster, Edward Everett, Rufus Choate and Wendell Phillips (still placed before long-suffering school boys as "models") where a sort of Ciceronian pomp and elegance prevails, often to the injury of that sense of naturalness and spontaneity so precious in securing the effect of living utterance. I once heard a Fourth of July oration by the late Galusha Grow, long-time leader in the national House of Representatives. As a performance it was superb: the way the speaker adorned his sunsets with classical quotations certainly aroused my unfeigned admiration. But to take it seriously was impossible: in power of persuasion it was as extinct as a retired politician. Today a trained speaker fairly pelts his hearers with bullet-like Anglo-Saxon monosyllables, getting results by the bite and swift impact of his words.

It was an appreciable part of the late Henry Ward Beecher's power, although his training was in the older oratory, that in contrast with the anaemic elegances then current, he displayed commonly in Plymouth pulpit a native simplicity of utterance. His sentences were full of the homely reality of the street and the shop, and, for that time, so unconventional that he frequently outraged timorous souls in his congregation as they heard sacred matters discussed with such leonine from-the-shoulder pith and poignancy.

It is a not uncommon experience to fall in with someone at a dinner table and be attracted by the felicitous idiom of his speech: and later on, getting a letter from him, to be amazed by the conventional tameness of his expression. Why is it, I have asked myself? The answer is not far to seek: at table, my acquaintance spoke off guard, let the speech instincts in his blood have their way with him: as a letter writer, he suffered from linguistic stage fright. Most of us are that way. Only now and then does a Shelley, a Scott or a Stevenson dare to let go with a pen. In these days of Freudian influence, it is well to remember that the most vital effects of our utterance lie in the subconscious. All idiom is born there. Listen to the happy, unforced, natural talk of children at play to be convinced of it. Certainly the moronic ineffectiveness so often found in our college-bred citizens in this matter of sound, forceful, native speech suggests such an explanation. It comes in part from the lack of a wide area of knowledge and conversation, which curtails and impoverishes the speech uses, and equally in part from herd imitation, which at centre means mental laziness. It is so much easier to seize on well-worn, stock phrases, rather than be independent, individual and creative. Larger ideas and greater play of linguistic facility is what one misses.

It may be added that the average business man seems to regard it as bad form not to fall in with the innumerable speech clichés of his associates. To use happy, unwonted idioms is taken for an objectionable mental strut. Yet is it not true that the commercial man equipped with such a vocabulary would outsell his mates? I have heard more charming speech from carpenters, longshoremen and tramps than ever issues from the polite mouths of so-called trained persons. The half breeds of culture who fancy that "would better" is better English than "had better," or who do not see that "I have got it" is stronger and therefore better English than "I have gotten it" belong to the same class of incompetents. They make you feel that no education is to be preferred to half-education.

Test the writer, then, by the degree in which he carries over into print the life-giving savor and the unbookish ease and grace of spoken idiom. We may never deny that even in the closest imitation of life in art, which is to say, the resemblance of the written word to that which issues from the lips in all the attritions of daily experience, a difference will be desirable. But approximation of the written to the spoken, without forgetting this difference—there you have the beau ideal of the lovely science and art of human utterance. I wish devoutly there were certain houses in this country where one might go with the avowed purpose of listening to, and participating in, fine conversation. Not stilted, formal talk, nothing like that. But a place inheriting the happiest graces of the elder speech, yet aware of the plastic vigor of the latest idiomatic utterance—a blend of the language of the past and present in the service of thoughts fruitfully exchanged. Such a house would become a salon, in the exact meaning of the word.

In short, the best users of English, past or present, speaking or writing, invariably manipulate the tongue in consonance with its genius: to wit, the native and natural way of saying things. Three things will always condition individual success in English use: a sense of the historic past, sensibility to contemporary speech color and music, and a literary personality that gives tang to what we call style. Many use English, but few are happy in it. One of the finest definitions of best English ever made is that of James Russell Lowell—"the speech of the people in the mouth of the scholar." Perhaps we may expand it, in the light of the argument here set forth, into something like this: "the speech of the people, in its history and present use, in the mouth of the scholar"—when he is a scholar, not a narrow sciolist or pedagogue separating language from literature and literature from life.

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SONNETS

Premonition

Whenever he was absent she would pace
The empty studio from end to end,
Hand clenched against her lips as though to fend
Some threatened mortal blow. With frozen face
Mask-like in an unaltering grimace
Of pain, she would compel herself to spend
Emotion in fatigue, pausing to send
A sudden look of anguish into space.

Always she meant to tell him of the grey,
Motionless doom that hung above her head
When he was gone. The words were never said:
Partly because it had not been her way
To speak of self; partly because she knew
These were but trial deaths she struggled through.

MARGARET TOD RITTER.

To Dante in Exile

Exsul immeritus! Thy lofty pride
And the strong breastplate of a conscience pure
Gave thy stern spirit courage to endure,
By bitter wrongs and sorrows sorely tried.
By one high hope thy soul was fortified:
When all else failed, of this thou still wast sure—
The hope of fame abiding and secure,
High as the heavens, and wide as earth is wide.

"How salt with tears doth taste another's bread!
To climb another's stairs how hard a path!"
What mattered that to thee, to whom was given
To eat the Bread of Angels, and to tread
Down Hell's abysmal depths of sin and wrath,
Up Purgatory's arduous steeps to Heaven?

HERBERT H. YEAMES.

The Fertile-Hearted

When I remember Iseult and the meek
And cloistered Heloise, and Juliet dead,
And how the fertile heart is put to bed,
I cry to heaven, and through crying seek
A door to open that the heart may speak.
Children of love on whom uncomforted
The storms of pillage beat, all songs are said
Around your virgin pity, proud and weak.

You virgins of the cloister and the tomb!
You cool, rich dead beneath imperial dust!
The world plows flowers vainly from its lust;
Your dead hearts flower into spectral bloom
More beautiful, long fragrant. You, through death
Are fertile-hearted; we are blowing breath.

HOWARD MCKINLEY CORNING.

Maladie Du Pays

Beyond the involvèd darkness of this earth
Wherethrough we move in endless caravan,
Haply from death we spring to a rebirth
Fulfilling some inscrutable, high plan
Whereof we cannot fathom here the worth,
Probe as we may, endeavor as we can.
We only feel, through life, a want, a dearth,
Rounding the drear and faltering brief span.

And though each lifting of the darkness bring
The prayed-for dawn, night threatens us amain.
We say: "We will believe, have faith, take wing."
But with the morrow, comes despair again.
Perchance in some far, wandering planet-world
Banners still float. But here the flags are furled.

GUSTAV DAVIDSON.

Ghosts of the Sea

They walk in silver moonlight on the sand,
Their heads uplifted to the ocean blow,
Her face like alabaster, carved by hand
Of some enraptured genius, has the glow
Of softest moonlight on it, and a tress
Of wayward curl is tracing on her brow
An evanescent shadow's soft caress.
Afar, the reef-bell's languid tune, and now

Resurgent thunders of the tireless sea,
And, crystalline, the softly-purring foam
Is gleaming on the shore, to grudgingly
Recede. Then, silence, but for birds that roam
The midnight sky above the lonely strand,
While, face to face, the spectre shadows stand.

JOSEPH KINNEY COLLINS.

Home-Coming

After long absence from my dwelling place,
The rhythm of today's returning road
Quickened my heart-beats to a wild mill-race
Of tumult as I neared my old abode.
The wayside stood emblazoned like a queen
In scarlet-maple robe and velvet cloak
Of cedars, and the sky showed tourmaline
And topaz in the thin autumnal smoke.

Then from a wide-flung door an avalanche
Of children poured! That swift, breath-taking sight
Swept toward me like a mighty springtime branch
Of cherry blossoms suddenly in flight,
Whirling through space its plumes of frosted foam!
Then arms enveloped me—and I was home!

ANNE LLOYD.

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COMMUNICATIONS

A DAY OF PRAYER FOR MEXICO

San Francisco, Cal.

TO the Editor:—I write to endorse the suggestion made by Father Garesche in your issue of November 16, that this year, at last, the feast of the Immaculate Conception be kept as a day of special prayer and effort in behalf of the suffering and martyred Church in Mexico.

His other suggestion—that each one write a personal letter to the President of the United States or to the Senator or Congressman in his district—does not appeal to me. The President and the Congressmen know what is going on in Mexico. Their attention must be attracted by such able articles as those of Francis McCullagh in The Commonweal. If they can read his account of the cruelties of Calles's régime without a shock, will they be affected by letters of protest? Why waste postage when some of the Mexican refugees are without bread?

As one who has devoted much time and energy to the cause, I make bold to offer another suggestion. Those who are responsible for the atrocities detailed by Mr. McCullagh and for far more diabolical atrocities not yet mentioned by him, are evidently of that particular class of demons that cannot be cast out except by prayer and penance. If then, to our prayers for Mexico we add a little penance—or its equivalent, almsgiving—we may get better results.

I have had the rare honor of finding a shelter in San Francisco for a community of Carmelite nuns, nineteen in all, exiled from Guadalajara, Mexico. They brought with them, as a cherished relic, some of the blood of Gonzales Flores whose martyrdom is mentioned by Mr. McCullagh. These Carmelite nuns are typical of the feminine soul of Mexico. By the cross on which is nailed the liberty of a nation, the Mexican woman stands erect like the mother of Jesus. The Carmelites of Guadalajara have sought and found a peaceful mountain where they can hold out their arms in prayer and where they will not be interrupted in their penance.

If any of your readers do not know other ways of contributing toward the relief of Mexican Catholics and toward the liberation of Mexico by almsgiving as well as by prayer, they may address Reverend Mother Josefina, C.D., 2246 Fulton Street, San Francisco, California.

REV. DENNIS J. KAVANAGH, S.J.,
Superior of the Jesuit Missionary Band on the Pacific Coast.

Chicago, Ill.

TO the Editor:—The articles entitled The Iron Hand in Mexico, by Francis McCullagh, are so deeply stirring that it would seem we must have hearts of stone and spirits of sickly hue if we be not moved to thought and action. Perhaps we might have made protest long ago but for the fear that shudders always in our being, of war, that terrible catastrophe through which we have passed. But while I pondered on the Holy Father's call to prayer rather than the sword, while I wondered what I could possibly do, one woman who feels that a word she might speak would never even be heard in the tumult of world affairs, I turned the pages of The Commonweal and read the appeal of Father Garesche, S.J., for a Day of Prayer for Mexico, December 8, and then the practical suggestion to every Catholic individually, to parishes and schools collectively, to write a personal letter to the President or Senator, or Congressman, a service which, as he says, anyone may render. It is in such a manner, then, that one small voice may become the thundering one of God. Will we do this, I wonder? This small personal service! I have written today, and if we all do the same, the "pen shall be mightier than the sword." Perhaps The Commonweal might reprint the last paragraph of Father Garesche's appeal.

MARY F. COUGHLIN.

"COMPANIONATE" MARRIAGE

Coeur d'Alene, Idaho.

TO the Editor:—Judge Lindsey wants us to try out his theories about "companionate" marriage. Does he not know that there are some things that we cannot try even once? One trial would be fatal. A certain man engaged in tamping down dynamite boasted that he never had had an accident. "I believe you," said a bystander, "and if you ever do have an accident, you will tell the angels about it, and not us." We cannot try out theories about an old-age institution like marriage. Marriage has accompanied the race from the dawn of civilization. As well try to change the natures of fire, water or sunshine as to try to change its nature. The thing is true, according to the law of the Medes and Persians, which altereth not.

Everything to be thought, said and done about marriage has already been thought, said and done. Everything has already been thrown into the crucible. The dross has burned away (as Judge Lindsey's dross will be burned away) and the only gold that remains is the pure gold of honest, inalienable marriage. Wisdom can never achieve anything higher concerning the relationships of the sexes than the Christian ideal of marriage. This ideal has been beautifully set forth by the famous Chrysostom (John of the Golden Mouth) in one of his remarkable homilies. This Christian ideal of marriage remains the highest, even though it is not lived up to in our decadent times.

Judge Lindsey accepts some of Jesus' utterances that seem, and seem only, to make somewhat for his peculiar theories; but as the Judge seems rather partial to divorce, all he can say about Jesus' prohibition of divorce is that Jesus meant it only for His own age or race. But why did Jesus forbid divorce? Evidently because He saw that the easy divorce laws of the Jewish code of His day were working grievous mischief to the moral and social life of the people.

Like all false teachers, Judge Lindsey accepts only those portions of Scripture that seem to bolster his own false theories, and ignores, rejects or squirms out of those portions of Scripture that plainly condemn his teachings.

CHARLES HOOPER.

CHRISTMAS CHEER FOR LEPERS

New York, N. Y.

TO the Editor:—The miserable lot of the leper today differs little from the unheeded fate of the outcasts long ago. Mental torture, physical pain and almost complete isolation make his condition worthy of something more than a mere verbal expression of sympathy.

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His life would be unbearable, indeed, were it not for the material aid and spiritual consolation given him by the Catholic missionary. In the footsteps of the immortal Father Damien, the missionary priest, brother and sister in widely scattered parts of the world make heroic sacrifices in behalf of the abandoned leper, and offer to him the only sort of aid that results in genuine peace of mind and holy resignation. It is not well known that missionaries are in charge of more than ninety asylums in which as many as 15,000 lepers are being cared for, or that they look after the temporal and spiritual welfare of thousands of others who are not in asylums. Because of a lack of available funds, the missionary cannot give to the lepers that touch of Christmas cheer which the anniversary of the coming of the Christ Child makes every heart crave.

The Society for the Propagation of the Faith cares for all missionaries everywhere. At this Christmas time it turns a willing ear to the poor priests and sisters who work among the lepers. And it directs through The Commonweal, an appeal to all its members (and every Catholic should be a member of this, the Pope's own Society) for Christmas gifts to the lepers. The fund raised is distributed impartially and universally among missionaries working for the lepers.

Donations of any amount, even the smallest, will be gratefully received. They may be sent either to diocesan offices, or to the National Office of the Society at 109 East 38th Street, New York City.

MSGR. WILLIAM QUINN,
National Director,
Society for the Propagation of the Faith.

THE CONCEPT OF THE "ORBIS TERRARUM"

Washington, D. C.

TO the Editor:—In the issue of The Commonweal for November 16, on page 681, commenting on the elevation of Monsignor Hayasaka to the episcopal dignity you say: "The trend of history has restored the concept of the 'orbis terrarum' to the Church as something more of a reality than a theory." As a Catholic, may I take exception to the statement? "The concept of 'orbis terrarum'" is not theory. Are we not taught that it is one of the notes of the Church?

We read in our little catechism: "The Church is Catholic or Universal because it subsists in all ages, teaches all nations and maintains all truths." Hence universality is of its essence. Hence it would seem that if it needed to be "restored," the Roman Catholic Church had ceased to be the true Church of Christ.

F. N. HART.

CATHOLIC ANGLES ON PROHIBITION

Norwalk, Conn.

TO the Editor:—Concerning a comment made some time ago in The Commonweal that one could remain a good American and an orthodox Catholic while still favoring prohibition, permit me to suggest that if there is anything more amusing than the attempts of prohibition apologists to reconcile the Eighteenth Amendment with the sources and spirit of the Constitution, it lies in the endeavors of Catholic proponents of prohibition to harmonize their position with the Catholic philosophy and tradition of temperance.

DONALD POWELL.

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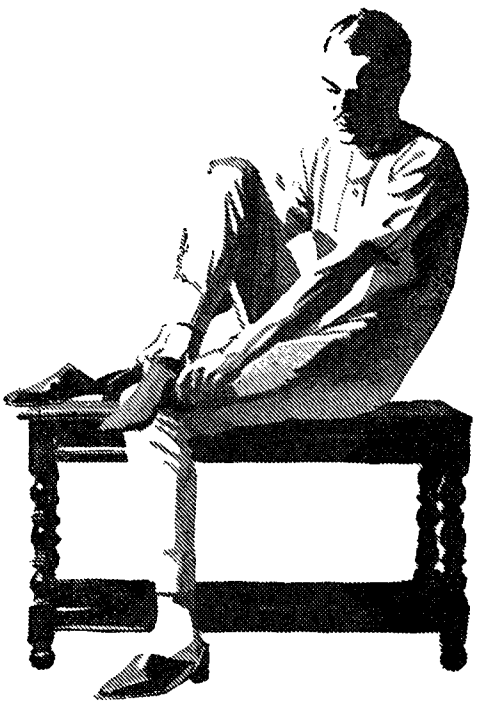

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THE PLAY

By R. DANA SKINNER

The Doctor's Dilemma

THIS satirical tragedy is a pretty fair cross-section of the worst and the best in Bernard Shaw as a playwright. It has some moments of sheer lyric poetry; a touch of blasphemous arrogance, when the dying artist flings out his parody of the Christian creed, substituting "beauty" for God (a poetic sublimation of the great god Good Taste); much damaging satire on the endless theories of the medical profession; still more satire that is so obviously unfair as to be poisonous; and an utterly care-free mixture of good and abominable play construction. It also has the Shaw stamp of genuine characterization brutally sacrificed to the needs of Shaw's own thesis. And rising above all this commingling of the admirable and the distasteful, is the genius of Shaw's wit and verbal agility.

As presented by the Theatre Guild—that lavish super-stock-company—the old wheeze comes brilliantly to life. I venture the statement that no play could be wholly uninteresting when directed by Dudley Digges and with a cast including Mr. Digges himself, Alfred Lunt, Lynn Fontanne, Earle Larimore, Henry Travers, Ernest Cossart, Baliol Holloway and Helen Westley. When witnessing a performance of these artists one has a sense of super-abundant riches, without the disturbing elements of the ordinary all-star production. These theatrical veterans have learned how to work together and so to blend their performances as to give a complete feeling of unity. Of course, Mr. Lunt's work will simply not fade into the general colors. It stands forth, in almost everything he attempts, with the singular fire and understanding of the true artist, and I doubt if he has ever done better than his present portrait of Louis Dubedat. The quivering beauty of an idealist's soul, masked by the infantile mind of an irresponsible child, gives him a rare chance for colorful playing, and he plays it until the rainbow pales; but never to the injury of the play nor of his fellow players. Miss Fontanne, as Jennifer Dubedat, makes doubly poignant her husband's battle for life and beauty. She, too, is an artist with few peers.

Baliol Holloway, last seen hereabouts as a brilliant Iago in Walter Hampden's Othello, plays Sir Colenso Ridgeon with excellent force and sincerity, as long as Shaw will permit. In the quite absurd last act, when he is no longer a character at all but a scapegoat, Holloway's Ridgeon becomes actory and depressing. It could hardly be otherwise. The ancient Sir Patrick of Dudley Digges is one of those finely etched portraits for which he is famous, and in this case, perhaps, one of his best. But in the general of the entire supporting cast, I defy anyone to find anything more burning with integrity than the Dr. Blenkinsop of Henry Travers.

The sum and substance of the present production is this: fine actors have created characters where Shaw supplied only straw dummies to be shot down by his own withering shafts. The play itself has little value aside from the brilliant writing of certain scenes and the one moment of surpassing beauty when Shaw unchains his humanity and permits himself to write a love scene before Dubedat's death that nearly merits immortality. (At the Guild Theatre.)

Spellbound

PAULINE LORD is probably the most successful failure on the American stage today. Her success is in the limited but superlative art she applies to every rôle. Her failure is in not finding plays worthy of her gifts. Her latest, Spellbound, by Frank Vosper, is a curious mixture of good though intermittent melodrama and a sledge-hammer treatment of a common psychological problem, the tendency toward dementia praecox. The play was written as an attempted explanation, in theatrical terms, of the defense plea put up some years ago in a famous English murder trial, the main idea being that Ethel Underwood lives much of the time in a world of her own imagination and can seldom bring her dreams or her impulses to successful achievement. This does not prevent her ideas from having an influence on others, however, and resulting in the commission of a murder. The plea is that while she might be objectively an accessory, she is not morally responsible for the crime.

Several acts are spent in building up the character of Ethel Underwood in minute detail. Incident after incident is thrown in to show that even when she sets out with great determination to do something, she is unable to see it through, also to show that while, in the objective sense, she is an everlasting liar, it is only because her little mental fictions have become more real to her than the tangible facts of life around her. This paves the way for the love letters she writes, darkly suggesting her husband's murder, but never intended to be taken seriously. Only her mental drama!

If the exposition of Ethel's character were less labored, and if the play tasted less of the ingenious lawyer's brief and more of character drama, Spellbound would contain the materials of good theatre in sufficient abundance to provide good fare. But the theatre is not a kindergarten class in abnormal psychology, and any attempt to put it to that use must fail unless the subject matter is handled by a near genius. Spellbound lives only in spots.

As to Miss Lord's own work, it is difficult to separate the interesting personal quality she projects across the footlights from her acting as such. One critic remarked to me that she always absorbed a play to herself, instead of sinking herself in a part. That, I am afraid, is very near the heart of the matter. She has certain limitations of voice, of which she is undoubtedly conscious. She has also grown dependent on various little mannerisms, very telling in their way, but thoroughly personal. Above this she has a veritable aura of poignant tragedy which can be both enthralling and beautiful. She is an artist in herself, but not as an instrument for a playwright to use. All of this makes for an interesting single performance, but for monotony when she is seen in a succession of rôles. It also makes for great difficulty in finding suitable rôles. Miss Lord has better sense than to attempt things which fall outside of her scope, but it does seem as if somewhere in this land there must be the work of playwrights who have drama first in their hearts. In They Knew What They Wanted, Sidney Howard wrote a play that fitted Miss Lord with glove-like precision. But since then, she has been floundering in parts that were good enough in themselves but unsupported by surrounding drama. Spellbound is hardly a

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good enough play to break this deplorable series of unfortunate mistakes. (At the Earl Carroll Theatre.)

Rosa Ponselle

THERE are moments, even in opera, when ordinary critical standards seem pitifully inadequate. It is not that these standards no longer exist, but that the work or the artist to whom they are applied completely absorbs them, so that their application appears trivial, even absurd. These are the moments when the critic is brought to himself, when if he is truly honest he can but say simply and humbly: "This is beauty." More than this no critic can say, and if he says less by analyzing or comparing, he misses one of the great experiences of life—the power wholly and unreservedly to give himself up to the enjoyment of a great artist or a great work of art. These moments are rare—in opera probably rarer than they were forty years ago; yet even of recent years they have occurred—when, for instance, Olive Fremstad sang Isolde, or when Chaliapin appeared as Boris. And such a moment occurred at the Metropolitan Opera House on the night of November 16 when Rosa Ponselle appeared as Norma.

In both her singing and her impersonation of Bellini's heroine of ancient Gaul, Miss Ponselle proved that she and she alone of sopranos now before the public, belongs in the ranks of the great singers of all time. Two seasons ago she gave a hint of what she was in La Vestale, but in Norma she has at last entered completely into her heritage. We have all known that Miss Ponselle is the possessor of the most gorgeous natural voice now before the public, a voice as truly touched with gold as was that of the great Caruso, a voice clear, poignant, exquisitely even; we know now that she is equally great as a vocal artist. Such singing as she gave in the Casta Diva has not been heard on the stage of the Metropolitan for at least a quarter of a century, singing so pure in tone, so clear in outline, so classic in mold, so ravishingly beautiful in expression. And afterward, in the dramatic passages she gave, both in song and—in large measure—in bearing, a performance of such passion controlled by dignity as no soprano since Fremstad and Ternina has equalled. It is useless to assert that in some ways Miss Ponselle's Norma did not equal Lilli Lehmann's, unless we add that in some ways Lehmann's did not equal Ponselle's. In fact it is useless to set one beauty against another in order to prove some petty point of one's own. It is enough to state that such performances as the Norma of Rosa Ponselle prove the right of opera to be numbered among the arts which count.

But Miss Ponselle by her performance showed us something else; she showed us that Bellini's early death robbed the world of a composer who might have become another Verdi. Norma is a work of rare dignity and tragic power, shot through with a wealth of haunting and expressive melody. It is a work which combines classic form with rich emotional expression, a work as truly a music drama as the Otello of Verdi or even the Tristan of Wagner. To say that the orchestration sounds at times thin is simply to say that Bellini was a child of a classic age; but the things that really count, the dignity of utterance, the tenderness, the passion, above all the melody, are there in surpassing measure. To Miss Ponselle and to Mr. Serafin, who conducted the performance and who trained the singers, the gratitude of all music lovers is due. Norma, though coming early in the season, will probably be the high light of the present operatic year.

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BOOKS

Liaison in Letters

A History of English Literature, by Emile Legouis and Louis Cazamian: Modern Times (1660-1914) by Louis Cazamian; translated by W. D. McInness and the author. New York: The Macmillan Company. $5.00.

CONTINUING his unique partnership with M. Legouis, the first fruits of which were reviewed in The Commonweal sixteen months ago, M. Louis Cazamian carries on the history of English literature where M. Legouis left it in the preceding volume, and traces its main tendencies and illustrations from the morrow of Elizabethan splendor down to our present somewhat confused age.

The story of this publication, in so far as its English dress is concerned, is a notable instance of international coöperation. It was originally intended for students in English at French universities, and its authors, we are told, "had not the ambition to reach the English public," which they imagined as being amply provided with text-books by native scholars. Its reception in England, however, was enthusiastic and an immediate translation was called for, so that a wider public might be reached in both old and new worlds. As a result, English and American students are now offered what is probably the most inclusive and brilliant study of their common tongue ever written by a foreigner, if indeed any history with a similar scale and sweep has reached them from any source whatsoever.

The modest plea again put forward by the two authors, namely, that their judgments may have "an added impartiality and their praise more weight" because of this exterior approach, will not be questioned by any reader equally impartial. Here and there a lack of first-hand acquaintance with English social strata has produced a little confusion. As one instance, the description of Wordsworth's origins as "lower middle class" is misleading, however natural for one who can know nothing of the "dalesmen" and "statesmen" of Cumberland and Westmoreland, or the social connotations of this remarkable category.

The beginning of the Restoration, in 1660, thinks M. Cazamian (and few will gainsay him) marks the real beginning of modern English literature. It was a period bearing more than one mark of similarity with our own. The attempt to establish a kingdom of God upon earth had ended in anticlimax, blue laws and military cabals. "The stamp of disillusionment was everywhere visible. . . . The nation as a whole, in its strong desire to live, gave itself over to ways of thinking and modes of life toward which its imperious instinct had already inclined it." From this epoch of moral fatigue, of which an atmosphere "of violent and often coarse voluptuousness" was merely one symptom, stem most of the modern forms. The essay takes its start with Cowley and Temple, the comedy of manners with Wycherley and Sedley, satire with Butler, rationalism with Hobbes. Stupidity and hypocrisy are belabored. "Never was there a time when the innermost recesses of subconscious egoism, or that folly in human nature which is quite unaware of itself has been so cruelly explored and revealed." Nevertheless, there are counter-currents and undercurrents. One of the things M. Cazamian has done best is tracing a whole subterranean lineage of mysticism and sentiment beneath the overlay of hard worldly wisdom. In the tragic temper of Otway he sees an afterglow of the Elizabethans, while of the author of The Pilgrim's Progress he notes that "Bunyan has been the faithful mouthpiece of the religious conscience of a people."

By the first half of the eighteenth century there is the rise of the essayists into a sort of apostolate of measure and compass. But M. Cazamian is most concerned with the beginnings of the all-conquering novel, together with the feeling for nature that is to flower into the romantic movement in the first decades of the nineteenth. This section of the history is almost uncanny at times in its frugal precision, and teems with happy perceptions which one is tempted again and again to quote. From De Foe onward: "England will gradually and dimly tend to reconstruct the unity of its conscious self round the sentimental, sensitive and moral suggestions which come to it from these men, middle-class or mediocre by birth," and which the author of Robinson Crusoe and Moll Flanders first makes articulate in profane literature. Johnson's pessimism springs from "an unhappy not an ironical state of mind" (a quite wonderful distinction, full of suggestion.) The feeling of the early nature poets for the country is "a tempered passion, vaguely religious and with melancholy as its basis." "An age that was weary of optimism and reason was attracted by the strange sweetness of despair [the phrase, it may be noted in passing, is also Santayana's] . . . . Once bound up with the examination of the reasons for believing, crowned with hope, this dangerous source of joy acquired an innocence, and became even praiseworthy." There is "a lack of nobleness in the motives of Richardson's virtuous heroines." Sterne's outlook on sex, for all its frivolous Rabelaisianism, is "a vision at bottom bitter, tragic, and closely allied to Christian pessimism." With Goldsmith's famous Vicar, the humanitarian and cordial aspect of humanity that is to flower in Dickens, is already well in sight. "Sentimentalism, raised to the status of a doctrine and a rule, finds the centre from which it will henceforth radiate over English life."

The true source of romanticism will always be a matter of dispute among scholars. The tendency today is to place it somewhat further back in order of time than was the fashion some years ago. In a section headed: Imagination: the Past: Ruins, M. Cazamian makes the interesting suggestion that renewed interest in the middle-ages came first of all from a contemplation of the ruined abbeys which stood all over the English countryside, "left to themselves and almost forming a part of nature's appeal. . . . The success in literature of the old abbeys is plainly seen before the middle of the century; they win first place in the favor of the poets before the strongholds and appurtenances of feudalism have their turn."

With the Victorian era, not to say the contemporary scene, we are on ground still disputed, concerned with reputations that have not yet stood the full test of time and perspective, and it is only possible to give a handful of Mr. Cazamian's conclusions. With Dickens, he tells us, persuasiveness is the supreme trait. "Everything considered, it is due to his talent of sympathy, to his sense of the pitiful tragedy of daily life, and to a rich vein of inventive comedy, that Dickens redeems all his blemishes and keeps his place in the front rank." Charlotte Brontë's novels "inaugurate in England that free revelation of sentiment which for three-quarters of a century is to be the special contribution of feminine literature to our knowledge of the heart." Rossetti he finds "the necessary link of communication between the two romantic movements, one of which ebbs away after the first thirty

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years of the century, while the other rises again in the last three decades." On Browning we get the telling comment that "driven to the pen by a rational impulse, he does not transform this impulse in the very act of creative invention." There are interesting paragraphs on Kipling (in whom M. Cazamian does not find much that is "morally revealing") and paragraphs somewhat less good on Chesterton, for whose perceptions of a truth that never grows old M. Cazamian (or his translator) can only find the entirely inadequate word "truisms." In the inevitable "scamper through" to which any attempt to consideration of the current literary scene in one final chapter condemns its author, M. Cazamian is necessarily guided by current repute, and it is no reflection upon the worth of his book to say that values here become somewhat blurred and flurried. America does not enter into his scheme, but in a reference to it at the very close, he takes leave to doubt whether the two literatures will ever draw apart to the extent which some trans-continentals, whose "jealous independence" seems to be in inverse ratio to the depth of their roots in our soil, would like to see reached.

Any added review of M. Cazamian's History of English Literature would require the compass of a small volume. All one can do is to give some idea of its scope and merits and to recommend it as almost indispensable to any student who wishes to gain an idea of the perspectives that lie at the back of the written word in English. To deal with three centuries of literary effort in prose, verse, drama and social study without omitting a single essential name, and to place upon each one some illuminating judgment, is a feat in sustained criticism that inspires more respect the longer it is contemplated. It is no disparagement to the Anglo-Saxon or Anglo-Celtic mind to say that no one but the member of a race with whom lucid perception is an instinct could have carried the feat through to so triumphant a termination.

HENRY LONGAN STUART.

Mannikin Morals

The Psychology of Youth, by Edgar James Swift. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. $2.50.

PSYCHOLOGY has been a fascinating topic of late. Perhaps this is the main reason why for this edition the title of the book was changed from Youth and the Race to that given above. The contents does not warrant such a comprehensive title, since it contains but a few chapters on applied psychology and the rest is a more or less sound criticism of our present-day public school system with suggestions.

"The purpose of this book is to help parents understand their children after they have passed the age of ten." It deals, therefore, with pre-adolescents and adolescents. The purpose is good but the way the author goes about his task and the principles that guide him are objectionable.

"The automobile, moving pictures, lack of religious instruction, and many other reasons have been given for the sudden display by youth of hitherto unexercised freedom of action disdainful of advice. . . . There is no single explanation of the indifference to authority. . . ." Thereafter, the author ventures to offer a series of explanations in eight chapters without considering religion, substituting here and there social and ethical and race motives of very questionable origin. Evidently he supposes that everything which modern materialists have written about evolution is solid truth.

"As the psychical characteristics by which early man maintained his existence and gained supremacy over the beasts from

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which these traits alone separated him, they are the beginning of human mind and the source of all positive, modern virtue. . . . The sins for which Adam received the blame were the virtues of primitive man. Recognition of this has revolutionized moral teaching. The devil is no longer driven out of children with the whip, but he is given opportunity for exercising his satanic ingenuity in ways that make for growth in social virtues. . . . Social and ethical attitudes grow out of the relation between ideas," instead of being based on eternal principles and laws.

In the chapter Fallacies in Moral Training, the author confuses mind with soul. "The unity of mind has always been difficult to comprehend. Early modern psychology divided the soul into faculties. . . . This compartment idea of the mind has been the cause of fallacies." May these selections suffice.

On the other hand, the book is entertainingly written. It contains many cases and examples from which correct conclusions may be drawn. The reports on public school activities give some insight into prevailing conditions. Unfortunately, the author never suggests the fact that the lack of religious training and practice is the most prominent cause of existing disorders. Surveys that have been made abroad and a survey now being made by the reviewer to investigate the motivation of moral behavior, sufficiently prove that by far the most moral actions are inspired by religious motives, and that motives of an ethical or altruistic nature are even far behind those that are purely egocentric.

The book may be recommended to Catholic educators and intelligent social workers for the purpose of learning the largely erroneous principles which underlie modern psychology as written about and applied by outsiders. Upon these principles the largest recreational and character-building organizations in the country are based; and although they could not stand the test of true philosophy, many accept and repeat them as though they were accepted truths.

KILIAN J. HENNRICH.

More About Shakespeare

Shakespeare, Actor-Poet, by Clara Longworth de Chambrun. New York: D. Appleton and Company. $3.00.

MADAME DE CHAMBRUN'S new book on Shakespeare is chiefly interesting for three aspects of the poet's life which she emphasizes: his relations to the Catholic Church, to his early patron, Southampton, and to Florio, the translator of Montaigne.

Madame de Chambrun (who, it is well to mention, is not a Catholic) brings together exactly what is known concerning the poet's religious views and environment. She points out first that Mary Arden, Shakespeare's mother, "was brought up a rigid Catholic," and that several members of her family suffered death for their faith. She then makes clear the strong Catholic element which existed in and about Stratford. One of Shakespeare's school teachers, Simon Hunt, later fled to the continent, where he became a Jesuit and died in Rome in 1585. Madame de Chambrun goes on to show that certain irregularities in the poet's wedding license might possibly be taken to indicate that the ceremony was performed by a Catholic priest. The last specific evidence on the subject is that one of the earliest biographers (Richard Davies) categorically states of the poet that "he died a Papist."

Now whether the Catholic Church may formally claim the Bard of Avon as one of its children is a question which will in all probability never be answered; to attempt to answer it is somewhat idle. Up to the time of the Commonwealth, England was predominantly Catholic in spirit; English opposition to the See of Rome was far more political and patriotic than spiritual; it required Puritanism to supply English Protestantism with a spirit essentially different from that of the Church. There is no space here to adduce any proofs for my assertions; I can only submit to any fair-minded student whether it does not seem obvious that, apart from prejudices, violent enough in all conscience, based on historical and patriotic feelings, there existed in Tudor and Stuart England no real un-Catholic spirit. It is not until the influence of Bacon and the Calvinists began to be generally felt that there can be perceived any true change in the English temper. If this is the case, it would have been merely matters of environment and expediency which would have controlled Shakespeare's conscious religious affiliations. The value of pointing out what Madame de Chambrun has so well pointed out is that it helps to explain both Shakespeare's intimate knowledge of the externals of Catholic worship and his quite surprising lack of prejudice against the Church, together with all that it represented historically and politically to the Elizabethan Englishman.

The author's second thesis, the close relation of Shakespeare to Southampton, seems to me to be less important. What, after all, is its significance? That Shakespeare knew and admired Henry Wriothesley there can be no doubt; that he had any such affection for him as Madame de Chambrun would have us believe, cannot be so readily accepted. Her theory of the sonnets, concerning which she has written much more than this book, is plausible and interesting; it will certainly convince no one who is already convinced of the truth of an opposing theory.

Establishing a close relation between Shakespeare and Southampton does strengthen the author's third and final contention: that John Florio was William Shakespeare's "living dictionary." For Florio was Italian professor to Wriothesley's household and spent the greater part of his time at Essex House. The theory that it was from Florio that Shakespeare got his surprising knowledge of things Italian is attractive and helps to explain a good deal which otherwise must remain puzzling.

One must remark before leaving Madame de Chambrun's work that it is marred throughout by an unfortunately amateurish quality, which manifests itself chiefly in two ways: she is constantly airing grievances against other scholars in the field. "When I timidly suggested to 'constituted authority' that Florio was there to explain everything, I was met by a blank wall of opposition and the reproach of 'wishing to discredit' Shakespeare!" "When I first presented myself at Oxford . . . I was confronted with obstacles. . . . My unfortunate sex did not allow me to enter as reader in the library of Corpus Christi College." The second mistake Madame de Chambrun makes is constantly to over-prove her point. The best example of this occurs when she lists the proverbs which Shakespeare may have borrowed from Florio. Both men include in their works the ancient saw "To make a virtue of necessity." But to cite this saying as an indication of the indebtedness of one author to another weakens the case seriously, despite other powerful evidence. For there is probably no commoner proverb; it exists in all European languages and goes back to their earliest beginnings.

But in spite of these faults Shakespeare, Actor-Poet, is a real contribution to Shakespearean literature.

HARRY LORIN BINSSE.

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Our Dexterous Novelists

Jeremy at Crale, by Hugh Walpole. New York: George H. Doran Company. $2.00.

The Mad Carews, by Martha Ostenso. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company. $2.50.

Zelda Marsh, by Charles G. Norris. New York: E. P. Dutton and Company. $2.50.

Dangerous Business, by Edwin Balmer. New York: Dodd, Mead and Company. $2.00.

Lazy Isle, by George F. Hummel. New York: Boni and Liveright. $2.50.

THIS group of novels by novelists of different styles of writing is typical of the modern fiction output. The books that make it up are good, bad and indifferent.

The position of Hugh Walpole is now apparently obvious. He is highly talented, but just misses being something more. Like Galsworthy, he is restrained and careful to keep free of any dirt that might soil his hands. Still, one should be appreciative of his fine craftsmanship and delightful entertainment. Amid so much shoddy stuff, he is a novelist of meticulous pains, and a psychologist of subtle if limited resources. In this novel, where Jeremy grows older, Mr. Walpole is well within the very best traditions of the English novel. The last few years have witnessed a number of the younger novelists projecting pictures of adolescent life, most of them full of sound and fury, in which their own ends were defeated by the rank mishandling of their narrative selection. In Jeremy at Crale there is both order and insight. Mr. Walpole has much to say about the school days of English boys and the cruelty, intolerance and dreams of youth. He is a protagonist for youth, but his portrayal remains balanced. He has gusto and depression, humor and temper, and it is all blended to a modulated tempo of narration. Mr. Walpole may not touch the high spots of novel writing, yet in his own sphere he is near to perfection.

Martha Ostenso is a fortunate young woman, who has made in a brief time a good deal of money for a young novelist, and, in general, has been heralded by the press as an author just slightly behind Balzac. This overt, immediate success has not, perhaps, been the best thing for her meagre talent. But, to begin pleasantly, The Mad Carews shows improvement over her two previous novels. The craftsmanship of a novelist is acutely on trial in the passages of transition. In the past, with Miss Ostenso, these events have frequently been accompanied by flurries of snow in the lofty manner of the lowest melodrama. This she has mixed up with her lyrical gift and a nice realization of atmosphere. The novels of Miss Ostenso have employed heavy plots and continual overstatement. Her characters have been excessively simplified to one note—a miser or a predatory woman. Now the youth of her Dark Dawn, though older, had about the intellect of Jeremy at Crale. Yet Miss Ostenso has no such insight into his thinking and dreaming as Walpole. He is only a cardboard figure in the plot. The Carews of her recent book are better drawn. There is more real understanding of the affairs of Elsa Bowers caught up in the grandiose behavior of the Carew family. But the characterization still is uncertain and the compelling surge of the book, where there is some hitching up of atmosphere and behavior, is broken, and the cheap dodges of fiction writing prevail. In time she may grow to suspect her facility, which leads her astray, let her characters come to life, and allow the atmosphere to serve as background.

In concocting the adventures of Zelda Marsh, Charles G.

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Norris has taken a sabbatical year from his serious studies of the American scene. He has turned from the novel to romance. Here he has detailed the sad affairs of a heroine who has Elinor Glyn's "it." Her ideas are maudlin. There are, however, some pretty sketches of New York and theatrical life during the gas-light and heavy plush age. The account of a vaudeville tour is also interesting. Its concept, as a whole, is sad stuff for Mr. Norris to write.

To the writing of Dangerous Business, Edwin Balmer has brought a good many years' experience, for he is an old hand at the work of popular fiction. Dangerous Business is a novel by a man who knows what he is doing. It is better than most of his late books, with a nice mixture of melodrama and romance. To this he has added the overtones of Park Avenue life. Love and business are unfolded in a swift plot that makes no pretensions to be anything other than it is. The book is adequate to its purpose.

Hummel, who has to his credit a series of realistic novels, is on a holiday in Lazy Isle. It is a colorful chronicle of levity and high spirits. In his account of Capri, the peasants are more important than the Blue Grotto, though the loveliness of the island suffuses it with color. On a thin thread of plot, with brilliant story-telling, he weaves a series of excellent anecdotes about the natives. They are shrewd and humorous. The book is a gallery of well-rounded portraits. Its lightness and gayety is a pleasant change—but it is not for the delectation of the solemn minded.

EDWIN CLARK.

An Erudite Envoy

Recollections, Grave and Gay: The Story of a Mediterranean Consul, by George Horton. Indianapolis: The Bobbs-Merrill Company. $4.00.

MR. HORTON has had the great gift of preserving his humorous appreciation of the absurdities of our system of representation abroad, but anyone who has shared his experiences can recognize the ache through his laughter. In his fund of gay anecdotes there is more than a strain of gravity; there is melancholy; not bitterness, not cynicism, but rather disappointment, the inevitable fruit, perhaps, of conscientious effort in American foreign service.

The old-timer who has not become merely a time-server knows that, while few of our men charged with American interests in these past decades went out prepared for their responsibilities, all have not been prepared adequately who have followed them. Many of the former realized their unpreparedness and the lack of interest of the Department in their existence, but buckled down to learn their business. They know too well that their "trained" successors are often fatally handicapped by a self-sufficiency which effectually prevents their learning anything but the art of being seen, like Mr. Metaxas at Phaleron. In the old soft days, the Department seemed to cherish the quite modern ideal to "be itself," to be completely unhampered by anything "abroad." Overseas, consul and diplomat did not like each other. Consuls had to do with business, something polluting to diplomatic hands. But pure shirt-sleeve diplomacy was better at least than baseless snobbery—baseless because the exclusiveness of royal courts on which our young greenhorns base their attitude has all but disappeared from Europe, leaving its attendant snobbery almost exclusively an American possession.

The merger of diplomats and consuls into one foreign service corps raised great hopes in the veterans. What must have been their disappointment to find that a most necessary reform has crystallized so many unteachables at the top, barring advancement to the younger man who has realized that an American representative is of no earthly use unless he understands sympathetically those things which have made America, and that the veterans have no place in the new system!

Mr. Horton went out to serve with better preparation for his post than most could claim. He was sent to Athens and he had the inestimable advantage of Greek history and Greek letters before he went. He had the advantage, too, of contact with broad American life. So many go out to fix hopelessly the narrow provincialisms of Main street in the more showy provincialism of some European capital. He has little good to say of kings. Why not? It is better to see kings as human rulers struggling to perform their duties conscientiously against strong hereditary odds than to see them as divinities, which they are not, or as tyrants, which today they cannot be.

Are all these things in this book of Mr. Horton's, or have I merely read them into it?

WILLIAM FRANKLIN SANDS.

German Adolescents

The Gateway to Life, by Frank Thiess. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. $3.00.

SO WE are now to discover Frank Thiess! The first volume of a trilogy by one of the most definitely Teutonic among contemporary German novelists, excellently translated and issued in Mr. Knopf's best style. As a study of adolescence, the novel is complete in itself, developing five or six characters with sensitive attention to artistic reality. These boys of the gymnasium at Annenstedt are not less human than other lads (the ferment active in them has its replica in almost any American boarding-school) yet they do maintain a distinct superiority of presence. Clashing with the stiff pedagogy of their elders, and running headlong, of course, into the grim arms of life, they are not a light-hearted crew but they manage to gain one's confidence and keep it.

By comparison with English studies of youth, Thiess's picture is serious and even—perhaps—relatively sentimental. Notes of threnody and of high purpose interweave, there is no room for compromise in much of the conflict. Every single throbbing thread of personality goes on toward a decision that is ultimate, even tragic. Dietrich Gray seeks a lofty, disciplined idealism along a pathway clouded by death. Elias, poor, young, delicate sprig, perishes in finding absolution through cleanliness. And over the beautiful, moving adventure of love to which Wolf Brassen dedicates himself, there brood one knows not what fires, which shall transfigure him. Finally, there is the Germany that shall be, which beats to them like a rousing drum—a world tranquil, superior and refashioned by transcendent purpose. The art of Frank Thiess makes one think of great music constantly, so subtly does the melody convey its intricate and detached meanings. His idealism, however, follows the true directions of German speculation, away from naturalism and mere lecherous, romantic dreaming.

There is another book of which I think at the same time I do of this—Henri Pourrat's Mauvais Garçon. Too bad we are without the splendid artistic righteousness of these in our own local inquisitions into adolescence. They are frank, in certain ways even disturbing, but they possess a clean honesty and inspire a genuine affection.

PAUL CROWLEY.

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Piety and the Ponderous

Parvulus and Other Poems, by Sydney E. Jerrold. London: Ernest Bevon. One shilling, sixpence.

Ballads for Sale, by Amy Lowell. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company. $2.25.

POETRY and piety are sister things in their nature, even if we must deplore a piety, none too scarce, that sings poorly, and the songs of impishness that sometimes shimmer with the lights of an unholy charm. A general study of our devotional poets would lead to the inference that the great works of holiness had been written in the distant past, just as some of our critics assert that the great love poem must have been composed before the nineties. However this may be, we have to acknowledge in the work of Sydney E. Jerrold an unusual loveliness and spiritual quality. Parvulus, Happy Shepherds and The Everlasting Arms are poems worthy of greater ages of religious singing, poems that have a serene natural flow carrying sands from the Golcondas of the Crashaws, Patmores and Thompsons. The spirit of the work is cloistral with an elevation that recalls holy pastorals and the voices over the hills of Bethlehem.

In Ballads For Sale, the third posthumous volume of Amy Lowell's poems, there occur some striking lines—To a Gentleman Who Wanted to See the First Draft of My Poems—which may throw light on the poet's premonitory attitude regarding some of her recent biographers and their methods of procedure:

> "Take my answer then, for, flatly, I will not be vivisected.
> Life is more to me than learning. If you clumsily deflected
> My contact with what I know not, could it surely be connected? . . .
>
> Still I have a word, one moment, stop, before you leave this room.
> Though I shudder thinking of you wandering through my beds of bloom,
> You may come with spade and shovel when I'm safely in the tomb."

This remarkable lady had a capacious inkling of the glory of life, civilization and art, and a real cunning in exploiting these things in her verses. It was well known that she did not love Catholics, and her Gouache Pictures of Italy show the culture and the spiritual limitations of old Boston at its worst. Cardinals with "lowsy eyes and pendant jowls," offering to each other their nieces—"to your connoisseur's palate"; and her extraordinary travesty of Santa Settimana, reveal a rather poor provincial imitation of the late Robert Browning in Italy. Conceited self-consciousness pluming itself as talent, intolerant ignorance based on a dwarfish education and a poor heart-action, place Amy Lowell upon a pathetic eminence, where the slightest shifting of poetical taste will leave her quite forgotten.

Miss Lowell achieved a sort of prestige based on the side-qualities of her family and wealth; and on her absorption of a share of the culture and the methods of modernist French poets. Her distinction must be measured by the insignificance of the authors and critics she gathered in chorus around her. In reality she was a pale reflection of foreign writers who were none too bright in their original effulgence. She was more interesting as a character than as a poet.

THOMAS WALSH.

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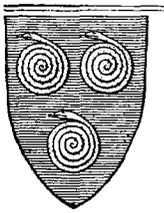
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Briefer Mention

Certitudes, by Sister M. Eleanore. New York: D. Appleton and Company. $1.50.

GOOD essays are not so numerous, in spite of the abundance of magazines, that a new volume composed of them ought to go without a sincere welcome. Sister Eleanore writes entertainingly on a number of themes—Longfellow as a poet for children, the moods and methods of contemporary poetry, pessimism and the novelist, Father Lord's Pageant of Youth, and the parochial school. The volume affords a good insight into the way in which a representative nun looks at the world. For ourselves, we believe the essay on Longfellow is the best in the book; but there are many pages to interest the friends whom Sister Eleanore has gained.

The Life and Letters of Venerable Dominic Barberi, C. P., by Urban Young. London: Burns, Oates and Washbourne.

FATHER DOMINIC will always be remembered as the priest who received John Henry Newman into the Catholic Church, but there is some danger that he may be remembered only for that fact. Actually he has many claims to remembrance for his sanctity, his labors and his achievements. Like the founder of his order, he was obsessed with the desire to contribute to the conversion of England. Only for the last ten years of an arduous life, and those years full of ill health, was he actually to carry out his wishes, yet he left a new and, as it turned out, a flourishing, province to his order. All of this is well told in Father Urban Young's excellent book.

The Happy Pilgrimage, by Corra Harrs. New York: Houghton Mifflin Company.F $3.00.

CORRA HARRIS takes the occasion of a journey across the American continent from Georgia, past New Orleans, through the Willa Cather country into California, to ramble back through her life and give us an autobiographical account of her thoughts, words and deeds from the writing of A Circuit Rider's Wife to that of Flapper Anne. Opinions on contemporary writers, on modern thinkers and those who have spoken without thinking, on the Old and New Testaments and their influences on religion, are interspersed with pleasant comments on scenery and fellow passengers.

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